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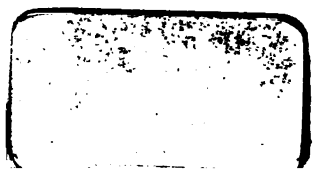

WICLIF'S PLACE IN HISTORY

WICLIF'S PLACE IN HISTORY

Three Lectures

DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN 1881

BY

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PREFACE.

THESE Lectures owe their origin to the visit of the late Dr. Cather to Oxford in 1879. He had for years devoted himself to the task of stirring up the public mind to some enthusiasm on the subject of Wiclif's memory; and it was mainly to his exertions that Quincentenary commemorations were held in the above and preceding years at London, Dublin, and elsewhere. He hoped, with the assistance of members of the University, to hold some such Wiclif commemoration at Oxford, but it was put off to another year. Meanwhile this excellent man died of a bronchial attack, brought on by his exertions in the cause.

It must be confessed that there did not seem to be much heart at Oxford for the proposed celebration; but it is possible that this lukewarmness might have been more the result of a want of accurate knowledge than anything else. That defect was certainly shared by the present Lecturer, who discovered how unsatisfactory were all the sources of information on the subject. He can

claim for these Lectures that they are the fruit of an honest attempt to understand the many problems which gather round the career of Wiclif. It will be observed that no one of the authors cited is implicitly followed; for no one of them can be exempted from independent criticism.

Perhaps Dr. Cather aimed at too much when he pleaded for commemorations of particular events in different years of the life of the great Reformer. Is it not possible that the country might yet, in the course of the next two or three years, become sufficiently interested in this extraordinary man to encourage some more general demonstration of respect and admiration than has yet taken place, a demonstration which would appropriately connect itself with the year of his death, 1384?

OXFORD, *Christmas*, 1881.

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

SINCE 1881, when these Lectures were delivered, considerable progress has been made in the preparation of the most fitting tribute to the Reformer's memory left open to his admirers. The "Wyclif Society" has obtained a sufficient proportion of the number of subscribers necessary for the copying, printing, abstracting, and (partly) translating, of Wiclif's priceless Latin Works, now lying unprinted in the Vienna and other libraries, to enable it to begin; and the first instalment of its labours has already appeared in the English Edition of the "Polemical Works," by Dr. Buddensieg. Circulars giving a full account of what remains to be done, and the names of subscribers, can be obtained from Mr. F. J. Furnivall, 3, St. George's Square, Primrose Hill, London, N.W.; Mr. F. D. Matthew, 94, King Henry's Road, London, N.W.; Professor M. Burrows, 9, Norham Gardens, Oxford; or the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. W. Standerwick, General Post Office, London. The amount of subscription is one guinea a year for a limited time.

OXFORD,
September, 1884.

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I.

THE HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE OF THE WICLIF LITERATURE.

I.

THE HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE OF THE WICLIF LITERATURE.

In this University it would be unnatural to begin a review of the history of the Wiclif Literature without referring to one familiar name. Not many years ago the only Oxford man who had in modern times made, as far as we know, a real study of Wiclif, Dr. Shirley, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, died early in life, and just when he seemed to be about to do great things. His present reputation rests, and deserves to rest, on the advance he made beyond his predecessors in the classification of Wiclif's works, and on the Preface which he prefixed to the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," the collection of documents which he edited in 1858 for the Master of the Rolls. That Preface was but a fragment, but it attracted an attention far beyond what might have been expected from its bulk. It was to have been followed by a complete edition of Wiclif's English works, and by a digest of his life and opinions, which would no doubt have been extremely valuable.

Some of these works have, since Dr. Shirley's death, been printed, in accordance with his wish, by the University Press, and edited by Mr. Thomas Arnold; some

others have seen the light within the last few months under the auspices of Mr. Matthew and the Early English Text Society. All this is valuable work; and Mr. Matthew's Preface is a distinct gain. But the full estimate of Wiclif's historical position has been made by no English hand. Like many other things which we should have done ourselves, it has been left to the Germans, among whom Professor Lechler, of Leipsic, must be especially mentioned. Utilising with great skill the labours of Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Shirley, and others, he has given us a most laborious and scientific treatment of the subject in all its various bearings, and he has fortunately found an excellent editor and translator into English in Dr. Peter Lorimer. He also writes from the elevated stand-point of one who has studied Wiclif's great series of Latin manuscripts, still lying unprinted in the Imperial Library at Vienna. It is, indeed, perfectly certain that a final estimate of the opinions and position of the man can never be attained until we have the whole of his writings before us, until the difficult process of sifting out the spurious works attributed to him has been completed, and until their chronological sequence has been determined by the critical examination of several competent scholars. But enough has been already done to demand a notice in this University, and to afford a fair assurance that we shall not have to retrace our steps in any such way as to make our present work a waste of time.

And the circumstances of the case admit of no delay. Let any one who has surveyed the field of knowledge

even now available for students of the Wiclif Literature look round him at the numerous English books which, in some form or other, undertake to deal with the subject. He cannot but observe that both the admirers of the Reformer, even the most industrious, and those who detest his memory, even the least unfair, have been the victims of the obscurity which has hitherto enshrouded the mighty dead. They have groped about in a most dim and confused light. They have had at their service only portions of the Reformer's works, and they have based their estimate on writings which are not his own. They have too often grounded opinions on isolated passages, and even these in the distorted form of "Articles" unfairly extracted from his writings by some Synod or Council bent on procuring his condemnation. These deficiencies are most conspicuous in the sketches which appear in our modern summary histories, but they may be more or less generally traced everywhere. Too often, indeed, the public has been at the mercy of those who have used the opportunity to convey their own opinions in the accounts they have given us of one whose distant orbit places him beyond the range of ordinary observation, though that difficulty has been far from restraining observers within the modest limits of assertion which befit the circumstances.

Nor has this absence of materials been the only difficulty. We are only of late beginning to understand that the contempt and ridicule which it has been so much the fashion to visit upon the Scholastic Philosophy of the Middle Ages, should at least be

silent in reference to those statements of Wiclif's which are conveyed in language familiar enough in his day, and only obscure to our ignorance. Men forget that they are dealing with the foremost man of his University at one of its loftiest periods, the acknowledged representative of the greatness of Grossetêste and Ockham, the man of whom his bitter contemporary opponent, Knighton, a most competent witness, confessed that he "came to be reckoned inferior to none of his time in philosophy, and incomparable in the performance of school exercises, a man of profound wit, and very strong and powerful in disputations, and who was by the common sort of divines esteemed little less than a god."

And if it is high time that some effort should be made to restore this extraordinary man to his true position with regard to the events of his age, no apology is necessary for making that effort at Oxford. Here, in this very place, under the shadow of buildings not even yet swept away, was, from five hundred to five hundred and fifty years ago, the home and centre of his wonderful career. Is it not from hence that one-sided and partial views of it should be corrected, undue depreciation exposed, the various phases of the storm which has for nearly all this time raged around his memory reduced, if the metaphor be allowed, to some atmospheric law? Ought it not to be from hence that a fresh start should be made towards rehabilitating the character and position of one respecting whom some, at any rate, hold the deliberate opinion that he stands at the very summit of the

eminence which has been climbed throughout the ages by Oxford men?

At this place it ought not to be necessary, but perhaps even here it may be the best plan, to devote a few minutes to the history of the processes by which the world has come to such knowledge concerning Wiclif as it possesses. We shall then, at any rate, be in a better position to comprehend how it is that such partial and contradictory views on the subject have found favour at various times, and how natural it is that the confusion should have lasted down to our own day.

The study of the Middle Ages has made some progress of late years at Oxford. It will therefore require no elaborate argument to prove that we know exceedingly little about it. With the exception of Chaucer, no English writer of Wiclif's time is read by any but antiquarians. The difficulty of realising the world of the Fourteenth century is still enormous. The whole fabric of the Mediæval Church, in the midst of which Wiclif's career is enshrined, has undergone such vast changes that people are too apt to forget that there is any continuity between it and the present Church of England. The social and political life of our times stands as far removed from that obscure age as the literary and ecclesiastical life. No art of printing had as yet transmitted the form and pressure of the times.

But still we have to account for something more than this difficulty of realising the distant and the dissimilar. We do not, for instance, experience it in

forming our estimate of Alfred the Great, though double the number of centuries roll between us. Or if we require a better illustration, take the case of Wiclif's own contemporary, the great William of Wykeham; how familiar do we at this place feel with him in comparison! We seem to think with his thoughts, to live in his life; but then he provided a continuous memorial in his magnificent colleges, and in the statutes which have protected and made them famous. His Quincentenary, celebrated of late with all pomp at New College, commanded eloquent eulogy, which passed with the whole country as perfectly appropriate; yet who can doubt for a moment whether he or Wiclif deserves most the respect and admiration of the world?

Wykeham would scarcely be remembered now, though he played his part on the political stage better than most of his contemporaries, except for one circumstance. His modern fame is due to the wisdom and munificence with which he used the wealth derived from his numerous ecclesiastical preferments in the foundation of the first of our great Public Schools, and in the improvement and completion of the University College system, which had been originated by Walter de Merton. To Wiclif we owe, more than to any one person who can be mentioned, our English language, our English Bible, and our reformed religion. How easily the words slip from the tongue! But is not this almost the very atmosphere we breathe? Expand that three-fold claim a little further. It means nothing less than this:—that in Wiclif we have the acknowledged

"father of English prose,"* the first translator of the whole Bible into the language of the English people, the first disseminator of that Bible amongst all classes, the foremost intellect of his times brought to bear upon the religious questions of the day, the patient and courageous writer of innumerable tracts and books, not for one, but for all the different classes of society, the sagacious originator of that whole system of ecclesiastical reformation, which in its separate parts had been faintly shadowed forth by a genius here and there, but which acquired consistency in the hands of the master. By him and by those he had trained that Reformation was so firmly planted that it took deep root in the land, and after giving the impulse to similar and later movements on the continent, issued at last in the great system under which we live, one almost identical with that of the Rector of Lutterworth, who died a century and a half before his work had fulfilled its appointed results.

Wiclif founded no colleges, for he had no means; no human fabric enshrines his ideas; no great institution bears his name. The country for which he lived and died is only beginning to wake up to a sense of the debt it owes his memory. And yet so vast is that debt, so overpowering the claim, even when thus briefly summarised, that it might be thought no very extravagant recognition if every town in England had a monument to his memory, and every university a college named in his honour. It is something to be thankful for that a private Theological Hall, bearing that illustrious name, has been recently built in our suburbs.

* Milman's "Latin Christianity," book xiii. chap. vi.

n be at once admitted that Wiclif's repu-
England by no means kept pace with the
/al of historical activity. How has his
ngely dropped out of the place which it
occupied? How is it that it has taken
i to advance so far as even to make the
for his commemoration which a few per-
ntured of late to press upon the public?
ll precede all other questions.
:y cause must be looked for in the resolute,
d successful efforts of the ecclesiastics of
ed Church to brand the memory of the
th the fatal stigma of "heresy," and,
the orders of Synods and Councils, to
r vestige of his writings on which they
ds. And here let us avoid a too common

t at this distance of time to imitate the
by the ecclesiastics of Wiclif's age by
heir conduct as if we should have acted
That way of speaking has of itself ob-
ress by the unfavourable impression it
on fair-minded men. Consider what a
xford Doctor (or Professor, as he virtually
ve appeared in the fourteenth century,
n his chair, close to this very spot, every
existing Church system, from the Pope
the friar at the foot, not with the vulgar
ckless fanaticism sharpened upon popular
less with the weapons of professed un-
iment, but with the well-tempered steel

of philosophical reasoning which was based on an appeal to the Scriptures and the Primitive Church, and invested with the defensive panoply of a strictly moral, industrious, self-sacrificing, courageous life. It was no mere University student, no mere learned writer, no fanatic summoning men to come out from an accursed Church and become schismatics. It was the one wise and prudent man on whom kings, princes, and Parliaments relied in their struggles for national liberty, calling upon Churchmen to reform their abuses from within. It was the independent inquirer beseeching men to consider what the Fathers of the First Ages had taught, and resolutely insisting on that incorporate union between religion and morality, which the corrupt customs and institutions of mediævalism had so grievously obscured. Was it wonderful that these customs and institutions, hallowed by the support of good men, each portion of the system having been commenced with applause by the generation which seemed to witness for its necessity, should appeal for protection against the ruthless destroyer? Even minds candid enough to receive some rays of light might well have failed to perceive in what quarter a substitute for the denounced system was to be found. It is easy enough to forget how plain the road has been made for us by the rude but effective processes of a later generation than that of Wiclif.

Thus to the Church, impelled by wrath and terror, it became a necessity that the writings, and even the translated Bible, of the Reformer, should, if possible, be utterly suppressed. One or other must succumb. Either

the Church must be reformed root and branch under this man's teaching, or there must be an entire obliteration of it. There was no middle course. They were successful just so far as this. The name of Wiclif was lost in the subsequent century, or only remembered in connection with what was thought disgraceful.

That Wiclif's teaching was not wholly suppressed and overwhelmed, nay, that his work for the Church made progress underground, in spite of the hand o power, was due to the circumstance that he adopted th Divine model—to the poor the Gospel was preache His "Poor Priests" (of whom more hereafter) reach classes which were freer to receive impressions than great and literary. His writings, laboriously cop and all the more precious for the labour which no of printing had yet facilitated, were treasured u many a yeoman's farm, in many a tradesman's and also in the halls of not a few sturdy knigh country gentlemen, who from their place in Parl exercised some slight influence in mitigation wrath with which the new doctrines were assail circulation was secret, a fruit the sweeter bec bidden by those against whose dictation m ciences revolted; it was influential on the mi the nation, not on its prominent men. of the benefactor was, as perhaps he w wished, forgotten in the doctrines the means of making known; fo name was naturally omitted. No ce, which shed such light on every clif's name before the world. The

a single work of his committed to print till 1525, i till after an interval of one hundred and forty-o years since his death, and eighty years after printir had been invented; and yet multitudes of books h already issued from the press. Nor was this first boo the "*Trialogus*," printed in England, but in German Add to this the effect of the wars and revolutions whic convulsed England for the greater part of the fifteent century. How many a name which would have com down to us with all clearness in other centuries, h emerged from the Fifteenth little better than a myth!

But a still more direct cause of the oblivion whic befell the name of Wiclif in the times preceding th Reformation was the discredit which attached to i through the fanaticism of so many of the "Lollards." The cunning skill which fastened upon the Reforme the responsibility for the levelling and socialistic doc trines of a large section of these men was only too suc cessful; and its influence was so powerful that it ha remained to our own day with but little abatement. I may be traced not only in the pages of Lingard, whic excites no surprise, but in such a book as Dean Hook "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," where w should hardly have expected to find the venerabl author referring to Wiclif's "republicanism" * or t the "extreme revolutionary principles which he ha maintained and propagated."†

So fatal has been this stigma to the Reformer's fam that it may be well to deal with it before we procee further with the history of the Wiclif literature.

* iv. 338. † Ib. 344.

Proceeding at first from the very natural hostility of his contemporaries, the survival of these charges—so far as it is not the result of mere thoughtless repetition—may be accounted for on two grounds:—(1) the supposed connection of Wiclif with the Insurrection of the Villeins in 1381, along with the assertion that John Ball, its moving spirit and the true progenitor of the revolutionary Lollards, professed to have imbibed his views from Wiclif; and (2) the mistakes which have been made in interpreting a scholastic thesis of the Reformer's——that "Dominion is founded in Grace."

The first of these causes of the discredit attached to Wiclif's reputation has been treated by many writers. It has been shown that Ball's so-called confession was not drawn up till forty years after his execution, and even from that questionable document it cannot be gathered that Wiclif ever held any correspondence with the rebels; while the silence of the contemporary Froissart, who treats the Insurrection at length, as well as of the later Walsingham, ever ready to fasten upon a supposed flaw in Wiclif's character, outweighs any such vague assertions. The latter writer does, indeed, virtually confute the scandal by connecting the movement with the Friars, who had recently become Wiclif's deadly enemies. Wiclif himself notices it as *lamentabil*[illegible] *conflictus*,* and strenuously defends his followers from the charge of disseminating a spirit of anarch[illegible] and disobedience. But the absence of this accu[illegible]tion from any of the articles officially charged [illegible]ainst Wiclif, when it is certain that the

* *De Blasphemia.*

most light and feeble charges
welcome, is of itself enough to
Dr. Vaughan has well said that "t
felt his dependence on the civil
means of protection against the
ruling clergy, much too sensibly
becoming the patron of revolt agains
the magistrate." *

As we shall not recur to this subjec
to caution the unwary against being
favourite device of the period followi
life-time, when the Lollards of all sectic
were many varieties †—were commonly
the convenient name of Wicliffites; a
has been repeated in later times.
unjust. It was to be expected that the
secuted men should degenerate when t
were removed by death or silenced by t
power, that their ignorance and fanatic
increase as the movement was driven intc
more secret channels, and that rank sociali
vagances should grow up amongst them.
offensive and fanatical conduct of these m
excited attention and provoked repression
would be an equally great mistake to supp
there were not Lollards of a superior type to tl
any rate the Reformer and his "Poor Priests
be as easily distinguished from the revolutiona

* Monograph, p. 263.

† Under the common name of Lollards was gathered every of religious malcontent." (Fasc. Zizan., p. lxvii.)

who disgraced the Pre-reformation as Luther and Melancthon from the Anabaptists of Munster.*

As to the quaint expression, "Dominion is founded in Grace," Dr. Shirley has shown that the second equally quaint, and to us profane, thesis charged against Wiclif, "God must obey the Devil," was used by him as a correlative, by which he sought to repel the extreme inferences apparently capable of being drawn from the first. They were both, in fact, the paradoxical forms in which the schoolmen of the day were accustomed to present their conclusions. It may be worth while to attempt to make them intelligible.

Wiclif found himself confronted with a vast, long-descended system of ecclesiastical domination, which required, if its abuses were to be removed, to be attacked not only by exposure, but by logical proof, suited to the feudal frame-work of existing society. The ecclesiastical system had been studiously built into that frame-work. The mark of a fee-simple, "for ever," had been most carefully stamped on every portion of it, irrespective of all reference to moral fitness or corresponding duty. At least it had come to this. His object was to show that the system was under no such inherent condition of "for ever," and that its being established was nothing unless it was doing the duty

* Mr. Churchill Babington, in his Introduction to Pecock's *Repressor* (Master of the Rolls' Series), makes the following remark, but it conveys only a part of the truth. There were Puritans and Puritans:—

"The discontented party of the Church of the Fifteenth Century may fairly be considered as precursors of the Reformed Church of the Elizabethan age, while the more extreme portion (to whom the name of Lollards is perhaps now more usually limited) were developed into the Puritanical party of the same period."

for which it was intended. As "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," so the clergy were established and endowed for the sake of the whole body of the Church; the whole body of the Church did not exist for the benefit of the clergy. The spiritual office was not a *Dominium* but a *Ministerium*. The ideal root-theory of the priesthood, from the Pope to the humblest village parson, was holiness. Every clergyman convicted of mortal sin had by rights forfeited his office; but of course this forfeiture could not always be enforced. God himself permitted evil. Thus while "Dominion was founded in Grace," "God must obey the Devil." Whether the salt had become so generally corrupt that it had lost its savour, the laity must judge. If it had—and he believed it had—"*Interest regum et aliorum rectificare eleemosynas progenitorum suorum*," * the powers of the State must interfere. He called on King and Parliament to see to it, but he never asked them to make an indiscriminate confiscation. Unfaithful clergy were to be judged by Synods; superfluous wealth was to be applied to pious uses, such as relief of poverty.† Now what is this but the modern doctrine of the Royal Supremacy and "Clergy-discipline"? What did he contemplate but some such reformation as actually, though with too much violence, took place a hundred and fifty years later? What are these principles but such as we see daily at work in Ecclesiastical Commissions, Cathedral Commissions, University Commis-

* *De Veritate SS.*

† "John Wiclif and his English Precursors;" by Professor Lechler, D.D.; translated by Peter Lorimer, D.D. (Kegan Paul and Co.) ii. 149.

olition of Church Rates, Tithe Commutation,
est? What is there in Wiclif's doctrine but
iple that ecclesiastics are subject to the funda-
condition of good behaviour, ecclesiastical pro-
the revision of the State from time to time in
at it may not be abused? Or, to look backward
as forward, what was Wiclif's doctrine but an
on of the old English Constitution? Was not
im of the State to prevent clerical scandal, to
h clerical crime, to destroy clerical immunity
law, and even to regulate clerical endowments,
antly and often successfully made, all through
Plantagenet period?

was natural that Wiclif's enemies should resent
doctrine as revolutionary; it is scarcely just that
should do so. They also attempted to discredit it
general attack upon property; for it was neces-
y that the jealousy of the laity should, if possible,
aroused, as if their turn was to come next.

There was just this foundation for the charge. It
true that Wiclif taught that for the laity also,
Dominion is founded in Grace." His doctrine was
e precursor of our famous modern apophthegm—
Property has its duties as well as its rights." No such
ghts, said he, are to be considered as inherently
nconditional and absolute in the sight of God. They
re dependent on His will, on His Grace. Your pro-
erty is yours in one sense, not in another. It is yours
o serve your generation withal; and it is one of the
fundamental objects of your being seised of your lands
"for ever" that you may provide for the worship of

God, and take your part in the affairs and see that its abuses are corrected. conscience leave these matters to the cl business.

It is only the student of Wiclif's w fully perceive that this not only was, 1 been, the meaning of his paradoxic Those works are full of exhortations to and respect rights. He constantly asse of obedience, even to wicked rulers.* I bear in mind Dr. Shirley's wise caution.

"ought never in justice to its author t without his declaration that it was pu ideal, and with the full admission that i patible in many of its results with the exi society."†

If bad and ignorant men were found great name in support of an indiscrim cation of Church property, it was the fau which had allowed Papal corruptions to r point that the oppressed, outraged, disg nents of the system might be reckoned population. If the whole body ecclesiasti eased from head to foot; if a network Indulgences, Simony, secularity, immo spread all around and over society, it was that many thought the time had come to through it, to resume or reorganize the a tions of the Church. Better the clergy shoul

* The English Works of Wyclif hitherto unprinte D. Matthew; 1880; p. xxxvi.
† Fasc. Zizan. p. 62.

again, and live by tithes only, and by alms—or, as we should say, by the Offertory—than go on for ever abusing the pious zeal of former ages. The blind were leading the blind. The teaching was known by its fruits. "That the state of society was widely and deeply corrupt, no candid person who possesses a competent knowledge of the subject will deny."* We need not appeal to "Piers Ploughman," or even to modern Roman Catholic writers, such as the one quoted by Dean Hook.†

Perhaps these first principles have been too much neglected in the usual surveys of the subject; but they ought to suggest one very obvious application in reference to Wiclif himself. A Reformer of this thorough stamp must needs have been acknowledged by all to have done his own duty, whether in his University or in his different country parishes, with an honest devotion beyond the reach of hostile criticism. Amidst the loud chorus of disapprobation, hatred, and contempt, not a challenging voice was raised, not a trace of an attempt to apply the *tu quoque* argument has yet been found in the writings of the age. It was the goodness of the man which made him formidable. We shall not then find it difficult to understand how the English Inquisition—for such was its self-selected name—which became all-powerful at the close of the Fourteenth, and remained so all through the Fifteenth century, was inflexibly resolved to crush out the very name of the Reformer, and almost succeeded; and why no one thought of reviving his memory, or printing

* Babington's Preface to Pecock's *Repressor*, p. xxxi.
† "Lives of Archbishops," iii., 58.

his works, even when the Press was bursting into life, and the Renaissance had filled the land.

But it may be asked—if the latent spirit of protest and inquiry which had been created in England by his exertions, if tradition and the private circulation of his *vernacula*, which, Leland tells us, at an interval of more than a century, were "widely read" in his time, with their dumb appeal to human gratitude, failed to place his name in the front rank—how was it that the Bible, which he had been the first to translate into current English, and which was the very corner-stone of the Reformation, had equally failed to hand down the personality of the Reformer? It may be accounted for partly by its expensiveness, partly by the secrecy of its circulation.

The Bible translated by Wiclif and his associates, or rather the two Bibles—for there were two distinct copies—cost what we should now consider an enormous sum, and therefore could not, in its entirety, be the property of more than a few. Indeed it would hardly have been circulated at all, even in portions, if such a stringent prohibition had existed before 1408 as was issued in that year by Archbishop Arundel and his Convocation. It was as follows:—

"That no unauthorised person should hereafter translate any portion of Holy Scripture into English, or any other language, by way of book, little book, or tract; and that no such book or tract should be read either in whole or in part, publicly or privately, that was composed lately in the time of John Wiclif, or since, under the penalty of the greater excommunication, till the

'anslation shall be approved either by the Bishop Diocese, or, if necessary, by a Provincial Council."

needless to say that this was tantamount to e prohibition.

pily for the world several years of comparative had intervened before the Lancastrian dynasty ed against it, turning for help in its hour of ss to the Archbishop and the hierarchy; and nt use had been made of the interval. In all lity also, even after the prohibition, this decree ocation was more easily evaded than it would en had the Bible been printed. Secrecy was sily preserved when one man could copy, when printing-presses necessarily attracted ion; and it was an obvious precaution, care- served, to omit the names of the translators. ains how copies of the Bible, many of them transcribed, found their way into the princes and great ecclesiastics, and how as More and Cranmer were deceived into at the unreformed Church had not impeded ion. More had himself seen many English Bible which he believed to be prior to e. It is now known that he had never glish Bible but those of Wiclif. It was e one translation of the whole of the into English which had ever been made, by a hundred years the first translation into language. Bede had translated St. John's the vernacular of his day; "fragments there [English and in] several languages; but

this work, being complete from Genesis
intelligible to the people of that day, an
their express perusal, may be regard
positive instance of the kind in modern
It is impossible to measure the ful
extraordinary work of Wiclif and h
there is no excuse in the present day in
respect of it, or for underrating its t
splendid version has long been before
been sumptuously and most carefull
Forshall and Sir Frederick Madden
all others most fitted for a task
twenty-two laborious years. For o
the remarkable thing is that when t
openly on the scene as the main ag
Reformation, it was not due to Wicl
the equally extraordinary exertions
dale. His translation from the Heb
the English of his day, which h
considerable change since Wiclif w
at once (1526) occupied the grou
only from this cause and from
Wiclif's translation, which was n
the Vulgate, but from the immens
and extent of production caused b
Bible could be bought for some
former cost of Wiclif's, *i.e.* for
sixpence, or about two pounds

*Anderson's "History of the Bible." Th
treated in the preface to Forshall and
Bibl ...ll as by Dr. Lechler (vol. i.

gely the Reformer's translation had taught
arty" and "Bible-men" of the fifteenth
nd contributed to the religious knowledge
ared the ground for the Reformation, how-
it had served as a model for the new book,
o see why the name of Wiclif remained in
the very time when his labours were at
l with success. The English people, though
lreamt of it, owed perhaps more to Wiclif
ıer.

ıe case in other words:—while the classi-
ions from Italy ought to have their full
edit for opening the eyes of the early
f the sixteenth century, while we cannot
how the next generation were influenced
mplation of the furious struggle going on
while we cannot refuse to perceive the
ayed by the personal character of Henry
we are also called upon to give its full
gradual education of the English people,
ɔen steadily proceeding beneath the sur-
r ever since Wiclif's time. It is not too
that it saved the English Reformation
ravagances and errors which naturally
he comparative suddenness of the change
We are all, in short, familiar enough with
it was through the powerful impulse
if's works that the principles of the Re-
le their way in Bohemia, from thence

ıce of Forshall and Madden, p. xxxiv., and Mr.
uction to the *Repressor*.

SECRET GROWTH

(through the foul proceedings of the Cou
stance) to all Europe, and becoming trans
the German mind, that they assisted Luther
about the Reformation with which we
name. But the circumstances we have
contributed to obscure the equally certain
irrepressible growth and steady develop
principles for generations, through Wicl
England itself; and the history of the
formation is unintelligible without it.
To those who have followed the argume
will not appear strange that it took nearly
to give back to the English people any
of Wiclif. A little further exercise of
to the events of those two hundred years
to understand why the process of recov
personality of the Reformer, during
three hundred, has been slow, fluctua
Let us attempt the briefest sketch of that

It was not till the "spacious reign of
beth" gave promise of security for En
from the Papal yoke that Foxe, the
whose famous work has been as much
modern times as it was originally overva
the memory of Wiclif for the first time
fairly before the world. Under the sear
modern criticism, while the prejudices and
of the learn have been fully expos

e research and useful history contained
and Monuments" is most ungrate-
. Yet the great Archbishops of Eliza-
dered it to be set up in "every one of
rches as well as in the Common Halls
, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and heads
d his professed admirers, Camden, Strype,
o whom history owes so much, cannot
reated with contempt. Written in 1563,
through nine editions in little more than
. set the example for multitudes of similar
Continent. Of all his services none were
ıe revival of a knowledge of Wiclif. Now
ne the main outlines of the Reformer's
ing out of the mythical stage, became a
ı history.

r was indeed as yet but weak and un-
oxe's contribution fell far short of per-
brought out into full prominence the
! extent of the reforms for which Wiclif
n relation to doctrine and morals, but he
;ht knowledge of his works, and he con-
;h those of his followers; his sympathy
he extreme opinions of the Lollards led
s, and the sensational character of the
adopted led him to regard a confessor
urnt at the stake with somewhat less
n, on Foxe's own principles, was Wiclif's
ll he unaccountably omitted all mention
r's chief claim to notice, the translation
On the other hand no writer has more

luminously traced his relation to the Bohemian movement, the Council of Constance, and the German Reformation.

It was this half-fashioned image of Wiclif, stamped upon the public mind by Foxe, which afforded such a handle to the Jesuits and other Roman Catholic writers of the Post-reformation age. Familiar with the weapons of the Pre-reformation Church in its seemingly successful attempt to crush its mortal foe, they braced themselves after much the same fashion to the struggle against his memory, but with a very different result. We do, in fact, owe the more just appreciation of Wiclif's position which obtains in our own day to those attacks, for they were the means of leading, first Dr. James, and then Mr. Lewis, to undertake a new and more thorough examination of Wiclif's writings. Subsequent English writers have followed in their track; Germany has joined in the pursuit; and we may now consider ourselves almost in sight of the goal which every lover of truth must earnestly desire to reach.

Father Parsons and Varillas may be taken as specimens of these Roman Catholic writers. With a considerable interval of time between them they adopted somewhat different methods of attack.

The celebrated Parsons attempted to prove that Wiclif having remained to the last within the Communion of the Church of his day, and retained the substantial outlines of its doctrines and practices, gave, however loudly he may have denounced its supposed corruptions, no countenance to the Reformers who had broken away from that Church, nor to the doctrines which had

been set up in opposition. Dr. James, Fellow of New College, the first librarian entrusted with the treasures by which Sir Thomas Bodley had just enriched his University, replied to the Jesuit in 1608. This acute, learned, and indefatigable writer preferred to rest his case, not on the argument of the earlier Reformers that the Papal Church had been really guilty of the schism, since it had refused to be reformed and had ejected the Reformers, or on the argument that, though Wiclif died within its Communion, he could scarcely have continued alive any longer within it under the ever-accumulating persecutions of himself and his followers, but on the very effective argument which his title-page exhibits. His now very rare book, an excellent specimen of the style of controversy in James's reign, is thus recommended to its readers: it is—

"An Apologie for John Wickliffe, shewing his conformitie with the new Church of England, with answere to such slanderous objections as have been lately urged against him by Father Parsons, the Apologists, and others, collected chiefly out of diverse books of his in written hand, by God's special Providence remaining in the Publike Library at Oxford of the honourable foundation of Sir Thomas Bodley, Knight."

Prefixed to the book are two of these manuscripts, which James prints by way of specimens; and the general plan is to marshal passages from the rest of those in the Bodleian side by side with the allegations of his opponents. A short abstract of the work may be acceptable, and it is certainly very much to the point of this Lecture.

The author commences by discussing what he considers the vital principles on which Wiclif had amply proved the conformity of his doctrine with that of the Church of England, and its distinctiveness from that of Rome. These are—(1) the sufficiency of Holy Scripture; (2) that traditions of the Church are to be brought to the test of Scripture; (3) as to the Papal pretensions; (4) as to the alleged infallibility of the Roman Church; (5) and (6) as to justification by faith; and (7) as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He next triumphantly points out Wiclif's true position on the articles of Roman doctrine which he was alleged to have retained. These include the number of the Sacraments, images, degrees in sin, auricular confession, satisfaction for sin, pardons and indulgences, vows, celibacy of the clergy, dispensations, equivocation, the denial of the Royal Supremacy, the Roman excommunication, Church government, purgatory, and prayers to the saints. On the last two of those points he admits that he has not materials for wholly clearing his author, but is convinced that if he only had the whole of his works together, which in the course of ages had been so industriously "mangled," he should find that Wiclif had retracted these opinions in his later days; and he remarks on the assertion of Friar Walden and Walsingham that he had spoken irreverently on these points, and suffered accordingly.

Dr. James next meets "Objections," both on the part of the Jesuit and of the "Apologists," and it might be useful to some modern writers if they were to study the mode in which this sturdy librarian deals

with the admissions against Wiclif's fame which were made by the latter, by men, for example, like Foxe and Stowe, who thought it necessary to repeat some, at least, of the charges made by Papal writers. Thus he contemptuously disproves and dismisses the assertions that his author held it generally unlawful to hold temporal goods, or that ecclesiastics should live by begging, or that all oaths were unlawful; that he was a Fatalist, or a Pelagian; that he had ever retracted his opinions, or that he was influenced by having been refused a bishopric.

The "Objections" made by the Jesuit do not admit of an equally simple treatment; but the author is fairly successful in showing that when Wiclif asserted that "mortal sin incapacitated a bishop or priest" he did not exclude the worthy receiver of the Sacrament at his hands from grace, and that when he used the expression that "there is no excommunication unless a person knows himself to be excommunicated of God," he was attacking the whole system of excommunication for private wrongs and mere formal delinquencies. A certainty of grievous moral wrong was a necessary ingredient in a Church censure. How little such necessity was generally admitted was sufficiently witnessed in that corrupt age.

One remark made by Dr. James should be specially noticed. It is that though Wiclif "notes abuses in general, he never names any one of his adversaries, monk or friar." In such an age, and under such terrible provocation, this is indeed praise.

On the whole, Dr. James's work was an important

contribution. The honest librarian was penetrated with an intense disgust at the process of "garbling," "mangling," "falsifying" that had gone on for so many years. He looked upon it in the light of a special Providence, as his title-page shows, that manuscripts had been deposited in the Bodleian which could yet be printed entire; he, at least, as the first person who had been privileged to use them, would do his best in the cause; and he calls on all who would listen to him to make use of the press while they could, if they wished to save what had been gained during the struggles of a century with an unscrupulous foe, whose resources never seemed to be exhausted.

That this enthusiastic churchman was not carried away by groundless fears is proved by the subsequent treatment of Wiclif's memory during the Caroline period. The Elizabethan estimate of the Reformer, which such men as Bishop Andrewes were found to endorse, began to decline under the tendency to extremes on either side which characterized the reign of Charles the First. The Reformer was, on the one hand, too dangerous a theologian for the Caroline divines; he was, on the other, far from meeting sufficiently the demands of those who preferred the position assumed by the most violent Lollards. The few men of the time who were moderate as well as learned could hardly expect the world to listen to antiquarian conclusions. Events were marching too furiously. And yet perhaps few things might have been more useful even then, amidst the din of that exceeding bitter controversy, than a masterly exhibition of the *via media* as

story of Wiclif and his opinions.
eed is plain from the following
1655, he says :—

hat we want Wiclif's works, to
is own behalf! Were they all
ht read the occasion, intention,
at he spake, together with the
s, distinctions, qualifications, of
There we might see what was
sion, and what the just measure
any phrases heretical in sound
x in sense; yea, some of his
essed with due caution, would
me, but cordial truths; many
ing not *granum ponderis* but *salis*,
grains of discretion. But now,
ed books which he wrote, being
t, and we are fain to borrow the
m his adversaries, from whom
are extracted, who winnow his
er, not to find the corn, but the

nces betray the sense of hope-
d the witty historian when he
f public opinion produced upon
ntroversies of the day. Few
e spirit of the Laudian church-
nark made in 1672 by Dr. Fell,
Restoration period at Oxford,
emark which coloured Wood's
e Reformer. It was this:—
grand dissembler, a man of

little conscience; and what he did more out of vainglory, and to obtain than out of honesty."* Wood eve ing in his Annals, in order to illustr which he copies from his predecess former had adopted his principles ou disappointment at being refused pre notices are conceived in the same spi likely to be corrected by mere exclus Wiclif's contemporary opponents and even he reports of Wiclif that he was *logus, excellentis et plane divini ingeni innumera doctrinæ monumenta post se*

With Fell and Wood may be clas Heylin, in his Animadversions on famous Nonjuror, Jeremy Collier, wl History, coming out in Queen Anne a standard book ever since. Again, there was no likelihood of Wiclif's fa by Collier, for he pursues exactly the Wood, makes no references whatever own works, quotes the same Roman C who were Wiclif's contemporary op course gives precisely the same one-sid actions and opinions. It is perhaps influence which has raised up the dense a proper comprehension of Wiclif's modern educated Englishmen.

While the memory of this great lessly hunted about in the seventeenth

* Wood's Life, lxxxi.

truck a prolific French writer, in the latter
hat age, to publish an anonymous book called
e *de Wiclefianisme, ou de la doctrine de Wiclif,*
s, *et Jerome de Prague.*" This was the work
has, a man who perhaps of all professed his-
as come down to us with the worst fame for
, and it bears undeniable evidence of its pater-
the almost incredible malice and ignorance it
. Still more happily the book found an English
or, a so-called "Presbyter of the Church of
l," for it is in reply to this "pretended Pres-
that the Rev. John Lewis, A.M., "minister of
e," wrote, in 1720, his celebrated "History of
e and Sufferings of the Reverend and learned
Wicliffe, D.D."

Oxe first established Wiclif's claim to respect,
we have for the first time a careful account of
former's life and opinions, together with the
nts referred to; as also some account of the
ript works which Lewis had himself seen, and
in many cases, copious extracts from those
This has always been reckoned the standard
the subject; it was reprinted by the Univer-
Oxford in 1820; and Dr. Shirley pronounced it
t, even down to the date when he himself wrote.
tainly commends itself to the scholar by its
ending, business-like style, and its painstaking
for accuracy. But it may be questioned
er the late Dr. Vaughan has received his due
Lewis's merits, except on the score of priority,
e ferred to his. Vaughan not only examined a

far larger number of the Reformer's
gave a much more copious body of extra
ever given before, but he collected
which had already been separately print
the most important parts of the famous
and produced no less than three success
in the years 1828, 1845, and 1853. Th
were put forth in forms well suited for
ing, and it is to these labours that t
England are chiefly indebted for the
Wiclif they now possess. Dr. Vaughan'
fully and gratefully recognised in G
noticing these two principal writers
Gilpin, Baber, and Le Bas should not
but they occupy a very inferior place.
these authors has produced the best co
he did not possess sufficient critical po
certain oft-repeated fallacies found in
and, amongst other things, gave further
indiscriminate charge of "revolutionary

Finally, to complete the proof of
recalling public attention to Wiclif, l
way of example three or four cases
longer living, whose treatment of th
serve as specimens of the all but univ
modern writers, great and small, to plac
and his work fairly before the publi
them the failure may be traced, as ha
reliance upon works which are now k
Wiclif's, or some traditional view of
which even the present state of our

shared by the writers, would have caused them to modify.

Lingard's History of England is a book admirable in many respects, and placed by authority on the catalogue of those to be studied in the Oxford School of Modern History. The author, as all admit, is the most fair-minded of Roman Catholics, yet he considers Wiclif's controversy with the friars ridiculous; the Reformer is scoffed at for accepting preferments contrary to his supposed principle of poverty; his "Poor Priests" are a body of fanatics, and paved the way for the insurrection of the Villeins; his appearance before Courtenay at St. Paul's is so represented as to do him a discredit which he certainly did not deserve; the order of the papers composing his defence at the famous Trial of 1381 is so disposed as to give the appearance of retractation—a mistake exposed by Dr. Vaughan; the subtle language of the schools which Wiclif naturally and properly employed by way of technical defence, is "quibble and evasion;" his appeal to Parliament from bitter enemies bent on his destruction, is an appeal to the "passions and prejudices of the nation;" the praise of "moderation" is given to his ecclesiastical persecutors who, for very good reasons, did not pursue him quite to the death; his theory that the corruptions of the Church had not attained their then existing development till mediæval times is a fantastic illusion; his doctrine on the Sacraments is misrepresented from beginning to end, and a whole series of passages of an opposite, but possibly reconcilable tendency to those quoted, are

omitted, though equally genuine and accessible with the rest; opinions apparently irreconcilable are simply extracted from different works which had been published at different times, and placed side by side without any allowance for that circumstance, while other opinions are cited from works now classed among the "doubtful" ones attributed to Wiclif. The success which attended his translation and dispersion of the Bible is ascribed to the fact that men were "flattered by the appeal to their private judgment;" and he concludes by remarking that "the seeds were thus sown of that religious revolution which in little more than a century astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe." Of course, the treatment of the Reformation itself is of a piece with that of him who "sowed the seed." It is a misfortune that a book with such serious defects should still retain its place in the Oxford Schools. It would be well if something could be found to take its place.

The shortcomings of modern Church of England authors are of course not so numerous, and they are different in kind; but they equally illustrate the need of sound knowledge based upon a complete treatment of the whole Wiclif literature. In the case of Dean Hook, to whom ecclesiastical history is greatly indebted, besides the errors already mentioned, he is responsible for the wholly gratuitous and unfounded charge against Wiclif that he laboured under the defect of "physical timidity," and for repeating the erroneous accusation that he explained away his more offensive statements. The Reformer is further blamed for affording an

"example," which the authorities of the Church copied from him, of appeal to the civil power. If ever there was an illustration of the fable of the wolf and the lamb, the good Dean has here supplied it. In the persecuted Wiclif we have a man appealing against an almost all-powerful hierarchy to the laws of the land. On the other side we have that corrupt hierarchy taking advantage of its unique political opportunity to obtain new inquisitorial powers, by means of which the State was made the dumb executioner under the control of ecclesiastical judges. Reflection on the manner in which these judges used their advantage during the succeeding period might, one would think, have suggested the fallacy of such reasoning. Let us not, however, forget that it is Hook who has said that "John Wiclif may be justly accounted one of the greatest men that our country has produced. He is one of the very few who have left the impress of their minds, not only on their own age, but on all time." *

Even the able work of Chancellor Massingberd, "The English Reformation," quotes, as Wiclif's, books which are not his, and betrays ignorance of the balance afforded by some of his writings to statements in others which he considers open to the charge of a "zeal beyond the bounds of truth and soberness." † He gives, however, a far superior sketch on every point to that of Dean Hook, though, unlike the latter, he seems to have made no use whatever of Dr. Shirley's

* Lives of the Archbishops; iii., 76.
† Fourth Edition, 1866; p. 132.

researches. It is a happy phrase of the late Chancellor of Lincoln that "Wiclif was the first who dared to outface the wasting system of corruption and tyranny which had overspread all Europe, and his success showed how much may be done against the world by one single-hearted man valiant for the truth." *

As Dean Milman wrote previously to Dr. Shirley,† his sketch, the most brilliant which has yet appeared, and the most appreciative of Wiclif's multifarious claims to our respect, is, like that of Massingberd, open to criticism from want of information. His genius, however, led him to discover a way through many of the mazes out of which others have not even yet seen theirs. He justly pronounces that Wiclif cannot be "fairly charged with insincerity, disingenuousness, or even politic art;" but, on the other hand, he errs in disparaging him for want of a constructive power equal to that he showed in the process of destruction. In this Milman has copied Le Bas, and been followed by others. The man who, as Milman says, "swept away one by one almost all the peculiar tenets of mediæval Latin Christianity, pardons, indulgences, excommunications, absolutions, pilgrimages, who had condemned images, at least of the Persons of the Trinity, rejected Transubstantiation, and, by the translation of the Latin Scripture and the assertion of the sole authority of Scripture, had laid the foundation," —surely this man had done all that the English Church required for her purgation. When at last the time

* Ibid, p. 154.

† In later editions reference is made to Dr. Shirley's work; but all the expressions and opinions mentioned in the text are retained.

ıe made no breach with the past, she re-
ew systems of doctrine. The rust of ages
y, and the book of the law once more
th from its hiding-place, everything else
a matter of course. If certain systematic
gradually found necessary, it was rather
temper of the times had changed than
ıherent necessity. But, after all, it was
of material that Milman erred. As Dr.
ested, and as another Lecture will more
it, Wiclif may easily be proved to have
ut forth a whole system of doctrine, almost
th that of our Prayer-book and Articles.
to avoid too great formality this Lecture has
noticed, rather than scientifically treated,
and present state of the Wiclif literature.
erly conclude with extracts from competent
ıs to what remains to be done.
of the Reformer's Latin works, copied appa-
ıntemporary Bohemians, and stored in the
ɔrary of Vienna, whither the course of events
them, have even yet seen the light, and we
endent on reports derived from those who
ited them. And yet Dr. Shirley told us
'Until some considerable portion of Wiclif's
, which are by far the most important, is
; will be vain to attempt [even] an accurate
nglish tracts."* This has been once again
r. Matthew. It had been supposed, on Dr.
ıuthority, that the English works were the

* Fasc. Zizan. p. xlii.

more numerous of the two. Mr. T. Arnold and Dr. Lechler have exposed this error. The latter speaks thus:—

"In fact the English pieces are, for the most part, nothing more than mere tracts of a couple of pages, and the largest of them fills at most three or four sheets, while the series of Latin works includes from ten to twelve equal to the '*Trialogus*' in bulk, every one of which would fill a respectable octavo volume. But the importance of the contents, too, in the case of many of the Latin works, is far superior to that of the English. Scientifically considered it is only the Latin works which are of value. Wiclif's philosophical and theological position can only be learned from them with certainty and thoroughness; while his English writings are chiefly valuable, in part for the history of the English language and literature, and in part for our knowledge of the influence of Wiclif upon the English people." *

Dr. Buddensieg quotes the distinguished historian Pauli in the same sense, and remarks that "Wiclif the theologian, Wiclif the controversialist, will only be thoroughly understood when a selection of the most important Latin works shall be added to what is already published." He also remarks,† with much force, on the light which these Latin works throw on contemporary history, references to which are scattered throughout. On this point we may form some conception of their value from the similar lights which have already been pointed out by Mr. Matthew, even from the stray English works which he has just col-

* Lorimer's Lechler, ii. 325.

† Preface to "De Christo et adversario suo Antichristo" (1880), pp. 8, 10.

ted and published. So also the late learned Dr. dd of Dublin, in 1840.

"They who would engage in the publication of the rks of Wyclyffe must be above the narrow influences Utilitarianism. They must keep in view a higher field learning than comes within the sphere of mercantile eculators. They must feel that the value of these cuments as compositions is but a secondary object of eir publication; the great end must be the discovery truth and the preservation of the remains of an istrious character in our history."*

In the face of concurrent testimony to the need of inting these works it is distressing to hear that the thorities of the Oxford University Press have found emselves obliged to decline Dr. Buddensieg's offer to dertake the task of editing them. He has well oved his competency for the work by the book to ich reference has just been made, and one must pose that nothing but imperative necessity could ve prompted the refusal of the University to perform at would seem to be its natural function. Let us pe that some other society or munificent individual y step into its place. No literary enterprise of a bler character is open to any man in the present day.† Having now accounted in some degree for the con- ed and irregular lights under which Wiclif has herto appeared before the public, let us, in the next ure, attempt to view him under the illumination latest research which it has been found practic- Eng land or on the Continent, to apply. e to the "Last Age of the Church" (now known not to be Wycl if Society" has undertaken the task.

II.

WICLIF'S PREPARATION,—AT OXFORD, AND IN RELATION TO PARLIAMENT.

II.

WICLIF'S PREPARATION,—AT OXFORD, AND IN RELATION TO PARLIAMENT.

No research has yet enabled us to settle the question of the date of Wiclif's birth. That of his death we know —1384. Several reasons may be given for believing that he was born at least as early as 1320, and that he was sent to Oxford about 1335. About thirty years later, *i.e.* in 1366, he appears on the public stage; and from that time we are able to trace his course with something like continuity. If we are right in placing John Wiclif not only as the greatest figure in Oxford history, but, along with Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Milton, as one of the four men who have produced the greatest effect on the English language and literature, and still further, as wholly unapproached in the entire history of England for his effect on our English theology and our religious life—how eagerly must we desire to pierce the cloud which conceals him from us for all those thirty years during which he was attaining his marvellous stature!

And yet we cannot even say with certainty, except for one year during that time, to what college he belonged, or whether he belonged to any college at all.

Reserving that question for the moment, let us contemplate what England and Oxford were during these thirty years, and form our own opinion whether it was not to be expected that some extraordinary representative of the times should make his appearance.

A great age, as we all know, makes a great man. The standard is high; the influence of that elevated standard is found in unexpected quarters; a progressive attainment of superiority may be traced in one person after another, till at last we have the culmination, the one man taller by the head than all his fellows, the representative man of the age. So was it with Aristotle in the golden age of Hellenic philosophy; so with Cicero in that of Roman eloquence; so with Shakspeare in that of the Elizabethan drama; so with Burke in that of the British Parliament.

In the age of Edward the Third Plantagenet grandeur, English military glory, European chivalry, were at their zenith. Condemn the defects of the heroic sovereign as we may—defects now so much more familiar to us than when Bishop Lowth, who also knew them pretty well, yet felt himself able to style him an "excellent prince"*—we cannot forget that he and the Black Prince were more than the restorers of the position won for England by Edward the First, that he was the grandson of a French monarch, the brother-in-law of the Emperor, the Vicar of the Empire, that he was very near being himself elected Emperor, and that three captive or suppliant kings attended upon him in

* "Life of Wykeham," p. 148. 2nd Ed.

London, the visible emblems of his glorious conquests. We cannot forget that the English people became truly national in his reign, cast off the trammels of the French language in their official documents, repudiated the Pope as an exactor of tribute, and scornfully rejected every vestige of Continental interference with English Church affairs. It was in 1350 that the English Parliament, undeterred by the example of France and the Empire, which had in vain attempted to curb the system of Papal Provisions, enacted that the "Bishop of Rome" should no longer "accroach to him the seignories" of the Church, and give them to "aliens who never dwell in England, and to Cardinals who might not dwell there." In 1353 followed the noble Statute of Præmunire, the foundation of the Anglican liberties, which condemned all who should plead in the Bishop of Rome's Court to forfeiture, outlawry, and imprisonment. We are not concerned here with the conspiracy between popes and kings, which so often defeated these statutes, with the frequent re-enactments devised to protect them, or with the reaction which subsequently brought the need of reformation to such a point that nothing short of violence, with its usual accompaniments of crime and error, could effect its accomplishment. It is enough to mark the dates of these great statutes, and to identify the phenomenon with the exact period when Wiclif's mind was being formed for the work which he was to do.

But if Wiclif, like Shakspeare in Elizabethan times, was the representative of the English mind in its unfettered national spirit, and its exulting freedom

from the dead weight of oppressive centuries, far more was he the heir of all the ages in his position at Oxford as the successor of Grossetêste and Roger Bacon, of Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Bradwardine. To Oxford had passed the leading place which Paris had once occupied. The foremost minds of Europe had for a century been at work there among vast crowds of students, whose numbers, though the received account is generally treated as fabulous, were, no doubt, enormous. It was, whatever else may be said of it in other respects, the golden age of intellectual activity at Oxford. Every fragment of what had survived the wreck of the ancient civilisation had been brought to this spot, and been pieced together by able hands. The most profound learning, the most daring speculation, the most astonishing memory, had been employed in the process; and the prevalent system of logical disputations, by means of which the "Scholastic Philosophy" assumed its actual form, brought to the front, each in his turn, the most supremely gifted and most laborious man of his day. Such were those that have been named. The last of them was Wiclif, surnamed by his contemporaries "the Evangelical Doctor." The title was prophetic. Long before he became the Reformer of England and of Europe, he attained his extraordinary eminence in the Schools by, or at least in connection with, his intimate knowledge of what was then almost a sealed book, the Bible. To what sources he owed the impulse given to his Bible studies is a question involved in too much obscurity to justify treatment in these Lectures. Peter

Waldo's followers were Bible-men, not heretics; and the University system was a ready means of intercommunication. Possibly it may have come through that channel.

Perhaps the reason why Wiclif must be reckoned as the last of the mediæval giants of literature is partly to be found in the very circumstances to which his career gave rise, that is to say, in the theological struggles which divided the members of the University, and broke up the common literary ground on which they had previously met. But it must be observed that the ancient literary system had, by the end of the two or three centuries during which Oxford and Cambridge had been operating along with their Continental sisters, completed its work. That system embodied the earlier Renaissance of Europe; it was the educator of the rude nations which had sprung up on the ruins of Rome, the matrix in which were moulded the fruitful processes ushered in by the Greek and Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century. Wiclif was the meeting-point of the two waves of literary and religious progress, the *terminus ad quem* and the *terminus a quo* of each respectively. The old bottles—(we must nowadays call them "wine-skins")—were empty; they were too old to bear the new wine; new bottles must be formed for that new wine. Wiclif was the first to perceive the fact; the last who, being himself formed under the old system at its highest development, could construct the new.

And this discovery was absolutely linked to the ecclesiastical phenomena of the day. It was Wiclif who observed with the eye of genius that the old society was breaking up, and that the vast ecclesiastical

army which had won the victories of Christianity over
barbarism and heathenism was no longer fit to monopo-
lize the education, the science, the political govern
ment, the professional occupations of the Engli
people. Already, while he was yet pursuing
Oxford career, the separation of the educated clas
into different professions was rapidly progress
The laity were beginning to make themselves fel
the schools of learning. The clergy were no long
necessary as in earlier times for the government
State; the laity were beginning to be capable of t
their place. And it was, theoretically, the prope
of the laity. The terrible abuses which shook th
fabric of society to its foundations were so clos
nected with the great governing position of th
that an observant eye could see that the time
when the State might fairly and reasonably s
have done your work. Go back to your dioce
superfluity of the splendid revenues which m
been necessary in early feudal times to sup
place and defend your rights, would be better
in other pious and charitable ways. Give p
new order of things."
Thus from a national, a literary, an eccle
social point of view, there was a call for a
tive man. However little England under
uch a man was being bred in its midst, ho
has understood it ever since, however
derstood even now, it will be easy to
lif was that man.
et us Add that in Oxford itself, his

school, and centre of operations, there were many remarkable indications of a change, which could hardly escape a less keen observer than the future Reformer. The awful plague of 1349, the incessant warfare between bodies of students, citizens, and others, culminating in the fatal "Great Conflict of St. Scholastica's Day," in 1353, the ill-odour into which the friars were falling, had all combined to reduce the numbers and the importance of the University very far below the level to which it had attained when Wiclif came as a youthful student to Oxford.

The first of these events, the plague, followed as it was by recurrent attacks of a similar kind, is well known to have had a most powerful social influence all over England. Dean Hook goes so far as to attribute the success of Wiclif in finding laymen to propagate his opinions, to the sobering effects of the Great Plague of 1349, which, destroying large numbers of the clergy who faithfully did their duty by the sick, called the "pious laity" to the front in order to supplement their ranks, "a new body of men, a body prepared to receive in due time the teaching of Wiclif and his followers."* And Mr. Rogers considers that the effect of the loss of half the population by the plague was to bring about an "economical revolution," to produce an entire contrast to the great material prosperity of the earlier part of Edward's reign, and in elevating the lower classes, through the increased value of their labour, to cause, at the interval of a generation, the Insurrection

* "Lives of the Archbishops," iv. 129. Lowth's "Life of Wykeham," p. 93, Note.

of the Villeins.* Whatever we may think of the importance of these statements as bearing upon Wiclif's later acts, we can easily imagine how his active and observant intellect would have recognised such social and religious changes, and how he must have meditated over the practical operations of those later years long before he gave effect to them.

Nor can we imagine that master-mind watching the fraternal conflicts of his own University and City—perhaps suffering under those terrible inflictions—without many a bitter sigh, which found vent in hi
resolution to reform the society which bore such frui
Still less could he witness the debasement of the mon
and friars, whose great institutions at Oxford s
overshadowed the as yet humble colleges of the sec
clergy, without a conviction that the time had pa
when they had any right to arrogate to themselve
function of educators, or bring to bear upor
Iniversity the influence of French Popes and f
rdinals. It is true that the latest researc
own that Wiclif's quarrel with the Mendicant
l not commence till long after the period of t
are now speaking; but who can doubt th
nd was forming upon the subject? He d
eed as yet declare war, for in their princ
erty h acknowledged their agreement wit
as against the "monks possessioners;" b
le they now carried out their principles mu
n tolerably obvious to the virtuous stude
rnest lecturer, the learned inquirer, the

* "History of Prices;" Introduction.

thinker. Whether Chaucer had Wiclif and his special friends in his eye, as some suppose, or not, we may be sure that the ideal of these Reformers was the "poore persoun of a toune," and the humble "student of Oxenfoorde."

The few touches thus given to the Oxford of Wiclif's training period will, slight as they must be in this place, suggest an image both of the man and of the material—local, national, and ecclesiastical—on which he was to operate. They naturally lead us to inquire as to Wiclif's connection with the collegiate system at Oxford, which was then by slow and painful steps emerging into a position from whence it was at last able to deal with the disorders that had culminated in the Fourteenth century.

It will of course be impossible here to enter fully into arguments, which will be found elsewhere, as to the claims of Queen's, Merton, or Balliol Colleges to the honour of this great name. Forty years ago the history of the collegiate career of Wiclif had been universally received as laid down by Lewis in 1720. He had begun at Queen's, gone on to Merton as Scholar, or as we should now say, Fellow, removed to Balliol as Master of the College in 1361, been made Warden of Canterbury Hall in 1365, and been expelled from thence in 1367, at which date he was lost sight of from Oxford in connection with any College, and became national property. But in the year 1841 the discovery was made by Mr. Courthope that there had been a John Whytcliff, who was Vicar of Mayfield, in Sussex, from 1361 to 1380; and as it was quite certain

hat the Reformer was never Vicar of Mayfield, or the
Vicar of Mayfield Master of Balliol, it was natural to
quire whether this Vicar might not himself have
een the Fellow of Merton or Warden of Canterbury
all, or both, and thus have caused a confusion between
e two men. Dr. Shirley undertook this inquiry, and
ne to the conclusion that it was so. The Reformer
l neither been at Merton, nor had been Warden of
terbury Hall; still less had he been at Queen's
l towards the latter part of his career, when he
l there in hired rooms. So cogent did his reason-
ppear that Dean Hook accepted this demonstra-
as a settlement of the question, and others have
red in the wake of two such authorities. Doubts,
er, were still entertained by Pratt and Stoughton,
litors of "Foxe's Martyrs;" and lately the
quest ion has been once more investigated by a
ompetent antiquarian, the late Prebendary
son- His article in the *Church Quarterly*
577 is considered by Doctors Lechler and
to have entirely cut away the ground from
feet; and though these authors differ
er on the question of the connection with
hold the identity of the Reformer with
of Canterbury Hall to have been now
ver.

possibly be too strong; but it must be
at some further discoveries since Dr.
e have much weakened his argument.
r hand the researches which have been
t All Souls have strengthened his case

on one point,—to which, however,
have attached too much importa
Dr. Shirley's time it had been
Vicar of Mayfield could not po
Warden of Canterbury Hall, as
was invariably spelt with a '
Warden with "c," as the Ref
Shirley met that argument
extreme uncertainty of medi
indeed, there are no less than
the spelling of the Reforme
Wilkinson supported the old
a manner that both Lechler
him on that point as full
they are wrong. In the A
found several deeds of this
early history of a propert
named Le Milbury, in the
and one of the parties co
the property is "John
field." This name is
(Wyttlyve) but in four
It may be noted with
Wiclif's collegiate life, that
of such differences there has never bee
both sides have been argued out with
and apparent cogency, as well as with
and good temper. We expect to fin
positive; they are not always courteous.
To the students of this subject it
point out why so much importa

to Wiclif's identification with the wardenship of Canterbury Hall. If he were not the Warden the charge so perseveringly made against him, that he became a Reformer out of revenge for having been expelled from the Hall in favour of the monks, is robbed of its significance. Not that this cause was assigned by his contemporaries, any more than was his supposed disappointment at not being preferred to what M. Varillas called the "Bishopric of Vincfort," a name which, for a foreigner, approached nearly enough to that of "Worcester." And it has certainly become a matter of less consequence, if it ever was of any, since it has been ascertained that Wiclif's bitter controversy with the friars did not commence till many years later than, up to quite a recent date, had been almost universally believed. In point of fact it did not commence long before the controversy on Transubstantiation in 1381. The books of that later period, the last he wrote having been the first published, and till lately the only ones known, have conveyed an entirely false impression on the subject. Nothing can be better than Wilkinson's words on this question: "If a man's actions are wise and moderate and his teaching reasonable, serious, and straightforward, the charge of personal motives and personal bitterness falls harmless to the ground." Nevertheless the controversy has occupied too prominent a place to be omitted in this Lecture.

In spite, then, of all our modern research we can only gather for certain, in addition to the positive fact formerly known as to the mastership of Balliol, the

negative fact that Wiclif w
College. The claims of Me
though only thirty-eight year
death, the College believed him
their body.* The inferential argum
in fact, pretty nearly balance one an
quite useless to build any theories, as
upon the supposed residence of the R
college, or at none. By 1360 his fame
become so great that even if he had belo
and opposed institution, such as Merton,
the Southerners, was to Northern Balli
quite possible that he might have bee
fellowship in, and the mastership of, the
Merton theory finds a powerful support
nation when we reflect upon the natura
Wiclif at the College of Duns Scotus
Bradwardine, and in which no less than
of his period had their breeding, and,
natural connection between Wiclif's o
religious," and the collegiate life wh
opposition by the very fact of the stat
of the institution, we must also re
elevated standard formed by his g
affected the whole University body
more readily than we can now
system which, for many centuries, h
and it is also possible that the ab
attention of the non-collegiate stud
tion of the "religious" in Oxfo

* Rogers on Prices, p

even a greater effect on him than if he had been housed in the rising colleges specially established for the protection of the secular clergy. At any rate we are on firm ground when we identify Wiclif with the college system, as Master of Balliol in 1360—62; and Dr. Lorimer has even advanced some strong, but not conclusive, reasons for the supposition that he had always been a Balliol man. Whatever may have been the previous facts, it is from this time (1360) that we may certainly credit him with a full share in all the collegiate influences of the period, and in the interests which connected the secular clergy with that system by the country livings attached to colleges. We can understand his joint relations to the college living of Fylingham, in Lincolnshire, and to the headship of his college, his resignation of the latter office when his "year of grace" had expired in 1362, and his subsequent residences in Oxford at Queen's, under license of non-residence at his living during Term. All this is just what we might witness at the present moment. It was part of his final education at Oxford.

It is also easy to understand how a man with these large and varied experiences would naturally have been selected in 1365, by Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, for the office of Warden of Canterbury Hall. The balance of evidence, as has been said, is decidedly in favour of assigning this appointment to the Reformer; and we may here accept it, with whatever inferences can reasonably be drawn from the circumstance when considered in all the lights which have been recently thrown upon it. Into the details we

cannot now enter. Suffice it that the Archbishop, whose Primacy had covered the most important part of Wiclif's long preparatory career, discovered in him precisely the man of "learning and good character," the man whose previous "fidelity, circumspection, and diligence" pointed him out for the extremely delicate position of warden of a new Hall which was to educate a new class of men.

Islip was not a man of mark, but he had done something to meet the wants of the day. He saw that the pious zeal of those who complained of the abuses of the Church required to be trained and educated. He would have a new Hall for poor students of Canterbury in close connection with himself. His own See should give the name, himself hold the post of Visitor, and secular clergy alone should be the Fellows. But he unfortunately altered his original statutes and resolved to try to utilise the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, by giving them the headship of the Hall and three out of the eleven Fellowships. Under that constitution the Hall commenced its career.

This was just one of those theoretical compromises which so often fail. It would have been very well if monks had not been monks. Of course they could not agree with the secular clergy who were their colleagues, and Woodhull, the Warden, was very far from the man to harmonize conflicting parties. In the course of four years the disputes had reached such a pitch that the Primate once more retraced his steps and superseded the four monks by Wiclif as warden, and three secular priests, Selby, Middleworth, and Benger. This was

too much for Christ Church. A wholly secular college was, as might be expected, a sore offence to the monks, especially as they had already had a taste of the government. Very soon afterwards (May, 1366) Islip died. No sooner was he in his grave than the monks moved heaven and earth, not, indeed, to obtain the restoration of the Hall to its previous condition, but to put an end to the quarrel by procuring the total expulsion of the seculars. Langham, the new Archbishop, himself a monk, of course played into their hands. Wiclif, after a wardenship of only a year and a few months, was, with his three friends, superseded by monks; and, soon after, the rest of the seculars followed them. An appeal to the corrupt court of Rome at Avignon was not likely to be successful, especially when this same Langham, having (in 1368) forfeited his office as Archbishop by accepting a Cardinal's hat, was thenceforward stationary at the side of Pope Urban the Fifth, who, like Langham, was himself also a monk. The defendant had virtually become the judge. The blow thus given to the secular clergy by these two high-placed men was a heavy one. In referring to the transaction at a later date, Wiclif plainly alleges simony and "false representations" as the means by which it was effected. It must be admitted that if his denunciations of the "monks possessioners" can be traced back to a date approaching 1366-7, when his expulsion took place, it would not be surprising if some connection between the two matters should appear probable to most men.

And it is also observable that it was this very year,

1366, which witnessed Wiclif's first appearance as a public writer on a great national subject, the claim of the Pope to English tribute; that is to say, it is as Warden of Canterbury Hall that he commences the new phase of his career. It would have been wonderful indeed if any pains were spared at Avignon to deprive him of the vantage ground in the controversy which he possessed as head of an Oxford House. He himself attributes the challenge now addressed to him by name to the desire that he might be punished by the Court of Rome and deprived of his ecclesiastical benefices.

It should be observed further that Wiclif's Oxford residence is now no longer continuous. He had already, in 1363, commenced the practice of living in hired rooms at Queen's College, then recently founded, and resumes it after his periods of headship, first at Balliol, and then at Canterbury Hall; but these later residences are only, as far as we can gather from the records of Queen's, for periods of a year each, in 1375 and in 1380. After 1381 we hear no more of him at Oxford. It does not indeed absolutely follow that he was not residing in Oxford because we can only trace him in the years above mentioned; but it falls in with other facts, if we now regard him (after 1367) as employed more or less in national services which required his absence for considerable periods.

The year 1366 (or 1367) has been generally considered an era in Wiclif's life; there is every reason for continuing to do so. The next ten or twelve years may

well be taken as a distinct period, coming at the end of his prolonged preparation at Oxford for the gigantic work he was to do in the world, and before the final period of theological conflict, bold confession, and bitter persecution which, lasting for six years, brought him to the grave in 1384. This may be called, speaking roughly, the political period of the Reformer's life. We have no materials for tracing his course at this time with exactness throughout, but we have several well-known landmarks: and we shall do well to take a momentary glance at the still larger historical framework in which the picture has now to be set.

Wiclif was, as we have said, if any one ever was, a representative Englishman. We have observed the coincidence of his Oxford training with the culminating period of English grandeur, and the probable effect of such coincidence on the formation of opinion in the mind of the keen-sighted Yorkshireman. It should also be noted that he was the follower of Ockham on the political and anti-Papal view of the questions of the day, the disciple of Plato, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus on philosophical questions. It was thus he trained his eagle eye for the true and noble theology of which he was to be the restorer and instructor to all the world. That he was thus eclectic in the best sense of the word, that he disdained to be tied down to the narrow limits of received systems, that he dared to think for himself and find his own way amidst the labyrinths of the Scholastic Philosophy, has not attracted sufficient attention. If his works had

been collected and printed long ago, we s
time have learnt to measure what such
pendence meant in the Fourteenth cen
they are not even yet printed we may s
wait for the recognition. It is the sch
sounded the depths and calculated the hei
the human mind can attain, under the inf
are only available to a man of moral
excellence, it is that man, and he alone, w
of intellectual strife, feels himself impelle
less energy to go forth into the world a
challenge all comers, and like St. John
"constantly speak the truth, boldly reb
patiently suffer for the truth's sake."

The grandeur of the English position
had lasted during Wiclif's training, bu
By the time he had become a public m
unmistakable signs of English decadenc
diplomacy was to take the place of th
stitutional struggles of victorious war. T
witnessed in Spain the battle of Najar
which the English arms shone with t
eminent splendour; and the concludi
Edward's reign was, we all know, as dis
preceding period had been glorious. I
of weakness the Popes and their armies
saw their opportunity for dealing with
pendent islanders. A precisely similar
sion followed the collapse of Henry th
quests in the next century.

It was in reply to Urban the Fifth

for the tribute which had been imposed upon John, that Wiclif had, at the request of the and Council, or perhaps of Parliament, come to nt,* and drawn upon himself the personal attack anonymous writer whom he designates in his as "*Mixtim Theologus.*"† It is from the tenor paper, together with some stray hints in other that Dr. Lechler has drawn the conclusion that was for several years of this time an actual mem- Parliament,‡ and that the expression he here the effect that he was "*peculiaris regis clericus*," not to his being a Royal Chaplain, as generally d, but to his summons to Parliament by Royal e one of the six Masters summoned in 1366. held the position of Royal Chaplain has, only been maintained on the authority of ve words, and on the accusation by a con- list that he was of the "house of Herod." unter-theory is too positively asserted by rman professor, even though a Vienna manu- as yet unprinted, contains a statement of s that he actually was in Parliament ten years That his name, however, does not occur in the "*Magistri*" summoned to any Parliament of od is conclusive as to actual Membership. He

Lizan., p. 258.

expression was translated by Dr. Shirley "the motley Lib. 413.) Dr. Lechler has shown that Wiclif applied it to nders of the Papal system who mixed up the truths of God om Holy Scripture with human traditions, as if they were lue. ler's Lechler, i. 211, 248.

was indeed summoned, in 1376, to attend the King's Council,* when the conversation he reports may have taken place; and it is quite possible that he may have been ordered to attend in Parliament on special occasions. Such a distinguished position would well fit in with the fact that he put forth at this period an harmonious view of the relations of Church and State, a view which deserves careful attention. It is the first attempt in the history of English literature to deal with the subject on a great scale, and on fundamental principles.

The theory of Dominion, of which some mention has been made in the previous Lecture, forms the keystone of Wiclif's position, taken up at this time, and maintained throughout his life. It underlies the public documents which he now began to issue; it guided him in his office of Royal Commissioner at Bruges; it was developed in the fullest form in his grand Latin work, the "*Summa in Theologia*," which was written during the period now before us, and completed at the end of it. This vast compendium of thought may be taken to sum up the mature opinions of the man, the results of all the scholastic and political experiences of his whole life up to that date; and of all his works, it is the one which it would seem most desirable to have in print before us. As yet it lies in MS. at Vienna. The views contained in it are nowhere to be met with in those works of Wiclif which are to be found in England, and yet they are essential to an understanding of the man. Dr. Lechler, who has supplied us with a

* Stubbs's "Constitutional History," ii. 436.

sketch, tells us that we have in the three books of the "*De Dominio Divino,*" which are preliminary to the "*Summa,*" "the path of transition by which the author passed over from the philosophical to the properly theological period of his life and authorship."* Nothing can concern Englishmen more nearly, for in this transition he crosses the political stage.

The "*Summa in Theologia*" consists of twelve books. The argument commences with the foundation of all human dominion, the Commandments of God, and advances through the next four books into the whole sphere of Civil Dominion, as founded on those commandments. Then comes the more strictly ecclesiastical portion, taking up the "Truth of Holy Scripture," the Church, the duty of the King, the power of the Pope, Simony, Apostasy, and Blasphemy.

The more one reflects on the grandeur and vastness of the conception of this series of works, as sketched by Dr. Lechler, the sure foundation laid in the Divine Law, the gradual and logical unfolding of one portion of the subject out of the other, the independence of thought, and the majestic fairness of the treatment, the more irresistibly is one reminded of the similar work of Hooker, the great champion of our Reformed Church.† It is impossible that Hooker could have known

* Lorimer's Lechler, ii. 50.

† This parallelism between Wiclif's and Hooker's treatment of their subjects was written before the lecturer had observed the similar comparison made between the arguments of Bishop Pecock and Hooker by Mr. Churchill Babington, based on a remark of Hallam (*Introduction to Pecock's Repressor*). But it would seem that Wiclif best deserves the comparison, suggested as it has been in the present Lecture by works probably unknown to the above writers.

Wiclif's "*Summa in Theologia.*" Both w
doubt, original. We are witnessing the coi
two great minds, nursed at the same Alma Mat
from the same fountains of classical educat
in the same logical training, endowed with
reverence for the Bible, and convinced that
they each witnessed around him could only
torily dealt with by going back to the fou
and distinguishing what was really f
from those accretions of human origin
acquired such a hold on the minds of
poraries. Of course, with an interval of m
centuries lying between the works, it woul
to press the parallel too far. The "knigh
among the caitiff brawlers" of Elizabet
Hallam styled the great Anglican, has t
via media through ranks drawn up on som
ent lines from those occupied by the leg
whom the still greater Reformer stemme
Hooker found the way already made by tl
predecessors, and only requiring judicic
clear away obstructions, skilfully interpos
two previous generations. His was the
defence of what the hand of power, rep
steady convictions of a nation trained
experience, had already established, the
reasoning supplied to meet the scornfi
those who insisted that the English Chu
ment was, upon grounds common to all
unreasonable.

Wiclif, on the other hand, had to

as yet unshaken Mediæval Church, which had "accroached" to itself, not only ecclesiastical dominion over Christendom, but also, to an immense extent, civil dominion. The Bible to which Hooker and his opponents equally appealed, was untranslated when Wiclif wrote. There was no recognised common ground. The vast fabric of the Papacy overshadowed every relation between man and man. What to Hooker's age was too plain to require argument had to be laid down with all the force of cumulative reasoning, and all the subtlety of an abstruse philosophy. Therefore, we must not expect to find a plain and, so to speak, easy treatise commanding, like Hooker's, our assent at every step. We are in an atmosphere of a different kind. We have to make allowance, to exercise patience, to recall ourselves to the conditions under which the combat proceeds. It is the cumbrous process of the ancient Court of Chivalry as compared with the simpler settlement of the modern duel.

Yet in both writers we perceive, not only the same general characteristics of conception and execution, but it is worthy of all observation that we find precisely the same principles traced and defended from beginning to end. Even the very order in which they are marshalled is only different so far as one has to bring up his argument to the practical question of reform; the other to defend reforms already made.

In dealing with the objection made to Wiclif's doctrine of Dominion we have already become familiar with the way in which he traced it in the all-pervading feudal system of the day, as applied by the Church in

its relation to the laity; and sin
fronted him at every turn, we sa
to prove that men had inherent r
laity fundamental duties, indepen
within the sphere of civil life.
what seems to us so simple re
the nature of God, his omniscien
of the Logos, "in whom the God
idea are immediately one," the c
ment of the world, the laws of t
natural law and the natural domi
law and the evangelical dominion
the human dominion of force
shows that none of these have
"for ever" about them. That is
Divine Dominion alone. Man is
the condition of freedom of the
vidually and independently respo
ence to this Divine Dominion.
has the light of Scripture, in adc
rently with, his enlightened reaso
God-man, his only Mediator and
of humanity, incomparably above
head of the Church; he has the C
consisting of the whole body of
priesthood of the elect, as the cha
Thus there is liberty of conscien
tian is, in a sense, a theologian; t
sal responsibility for the use o
thus the laity have the right to
who fail in their duty the Churc

ciple which had, indeed, been laid down by Hildebrand himself when he enjoined the laity to root out the marriage of priests). The clergy might become an utterly worldly body if the laity shrank from their duty.* If the Church officers, the clergy, would not reform themselves, the lords of the State, the rank and file of the Church, are bound to execute the reform; but it is only as a desperate remedy. Yet was not the case almost desperate? For himself he would spend his life in one great effort to lead back the Church to the institution of Christ. But the State must do its duty. The king as the head of the State is above all responsible; "he is God's vicar; every clergyman of the land, with his estate, is a part of His kingdom;" † and yet individual Christians cannot repose their burden on king or nobles, pope or priests, monk or friar. Each must act as if all depended on himself. "To say that laymen are not entitled to sit in judgment upon the life and official conduct of their spiritual superiors, is as much as to say that it is not competent for the laity to concern themselves about their own salvation." ‡

This appears to be the argument of Wiclif's greatest series of works.

Hooker's majestic argument is happily too familiar to require elaborate comparison with the foregoing. Yet let us exhibit a sketch of it side by side with Wiclif's. Who has not felt himself impelled to keep time to that stately, measured march, like men on their

* Lorimer's Lechler, ii. 125. † De officio Regis, Lechler ii. 162.
‡ *De veritate SS.*, Lechler ii. 154.

ordinary business overtaken by a regiment moving as one man to the musical rhythm of some well-practised military band? Who has not acknowledged at the end that the master has indeed kept faith with his scholar, when he claims to have "endeavoured through the whole body of the discourse that every former part might give strength unto all that follow, and every later bring some light unto all before?" Here we find the similar steps which Wiclif had laid down for guidance, in the nature of laws, human and divine, the freedom of the will, and the right use of reason, together with a subtle analysis of the right use of Holy Scripture, which, however, as was natural, considering the interval of time between the writers, appears to ascend many degrees beyond the treatment of the subject by Wiclif. So, also while in the body of the work we may fairly balance the treatment of ecclesiastical affairs, as suited to later times, against that of the early Reformer, we find Hooker carrying us just in the same way through the difficult questions relating to the offices of priests and laymen, on to the conclusion that ecclesiastical dominion or supreme authority is—

"communicable unto persons not ecclesiastical, and most fit to be restrained unto the Prince or Sovereign Commander over the whole body politic."* "Till it be proved that some special law of Christ hath for ever annexed unto the clergy alone the power to make ecclesiastical laws, we are to hold it a thing most consonant with equity and reason that no ecclesiastical law be made in a Christian Commonwealth without

* Preface to the "Ecclesiastical Polity."

consent of the laity as well as of the clergy, but least of all without consent of the highest power."* The Parliament of England, together with the Convocation annexed thereunto, is that whereunto the very essence of all government within this realm depends." "To define of our own Church's regiment, the Parliament of England hath competent authority."†

And now having noticed the principles of the Reformer's ecclesiastical polity, let us glance at the first political, the first concrete form of the great contention, as it appears in the reply to the "*Mixtim Theologus*" already mentioned, the curious and very able series of arguments against the Papal claim to tribute which profess to have come from the lips of seven lords of Parliament.‡ Dr. Lechler not only believes that the speeches are actually those of the lords from whom they profess to come; but, as we have seen, that Wiclif was himself a member of the Parliament in which they were delivered, and in that capacity heard and reported them. On the last of these points we have said enough; on the first it is obvious to remark that it does certainly, in order to accept the speeches as genuine, require a loftier faith in the intellectual eminence of English peers five hundred years ago than most Englishmen, even judging from their modern eloquence, will readily avow. Each of the seven takes a distinct view of the case, neatly separated off from the rest, not without a very clever *vraisemblance*, and reasons it in the most concise and pointed way, leaving the Pope without, as we should

* Book viii., ch. vi. 8. † Ib. ch. ii.

‡ This may be found in Lewis and elsewhere.

now say, a leg to stand upon. Some of the sentiments are exclusively Wicliffian; the whole of them have received their colouring from him. In short, it is difficult to conceive of the speeches except as a mere machinery for the expression of opinions which it was convenient to put into the mouths of these men, opinions—on the right of the State to deal with ecclesiastical grants, and on the liability of the Pope to sin like other people—which only the boldest minds had as yet entertained. We need not, however, refuse to believe that some speeches of the kind had formed a basis for this thoroughly English document, so natural to the people who had not yet realised their fall from an Imperial throne.

In the next place Dr. Lechler has discovered at Vienna a paper of Wiclif's, hitherto unknown, referring to a period a little later than this, and highly suggestive of the rapid progress of the English decline. It was not actually written till towards the end of the period we are now considering; but it exactly expresses the feeling which had up to that time been gathering strength. The Pope had indeed received a rebuff on the subject of Tribute, virtually decisive, though not, as Dr. Shirley supposed, actually final—for Gregory the Eleventh returned to the charge again in 1374;* but two years before the latter date this same Pope had sent one Arnald Garnier into England as Nuncio and Receiver of the Papal dues. There is nothing to show that this agent differed from his predecessors as to his actual func-

* The English Works of Wyclif; Matthew, p. vi., note 2.

tions; but the anti-Papal spirit of the country had subjected him to a novel species of oath, which, though he had taken it in the most public and formal manner, he did not choose to regard in a literal sense. This oath had bound him "not only to be true and loyal to the King, to keep the Council informed as to all letters, Papal or others, that he received, and neither to send money out of the realm, nor to leave it himself without special licence, but also that he would neither himself do, or permit others to do anything which could possibly be displeasing and prejudicial to the King's Royal Majesty, his royal laws and rights, or to any one of his subjects."* Wiclif's paper, "*De juramento Arnaldi*," is written to prove that he has broken his oath in almost every particular. He shows that the interests both of King and people have been grossly prejudiced, and that Parliament is only too well aware of the fact; the poor have been robbed of their due; the Church stripped of the alms given for its support; the prosperity of the kingdom seriously diminished; God himself dishonoured; Church services crippled; the very nature of an oath depraved. All the usual prevarications on this point are tersely exposed, and the Pope is roundly declared "*peccabilis*." "Here," says Lechler, we have "the earliest germs of his later strivings for the Reformation of the Church." †

We connect these two political documents with the fact which intervened between the dates of their publication, Wiclif's Embassy, as one of the Royal Commissaries, to Bruges in 1374. He was now, by the

* Lorimer's Lechler, ii. 343. † Ib. i. 225.

fact of this appointment, proclaimed, what he had already for some time been, one of the leading men of the day; and the principles for which he had become distinguished were doubtless, under the circumstances of this public employment, both strengthened and advanced. He took rank as second in the Commission, coming next after the Bishop of Bangor; his zeal may be traced in his embarcation from London on the very day after the Commission had been issued. The object of this Embassy was to make a solemn protest against the Papal seizure of English patronage, of which Parliament had vehemently complained in 1373, for which it now obtained no redress—(we may be sure it was not Wiclif's fault), of which it complained again in 1376 and 1377, against which no Statutes of Provisors, however often re-enacted, were of any avail, and which never ceased till England shook herself free of the Papal yoke. The accidental circumstances of this mission, the greatness of Bruges, then the emporium of North Continental Europe, the exalted rank of the Papal Commissioners, and the concurrence of the negotiations for peace with France, which, under the French princes of the blood and John of Gaunt, were proceeding at the same moment, have suggested to many writers the importance of the event in Wiclif's training. It has been compared to Luther's famous visit to Rome. To such a mind, so prepared, there was indeed everything present in this visit which could be required to ripen the process of reflection. He had the opportunity of watching the springs which moved the world; the

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than the old chroniclers—who hated him

his support of Wiclif, or the modern writers whose most praiseworthy love of the British Constitution blinds them to any merit on the part of those who tried to check its development—are in the habit of placing before us. In Godwin's "Chaucer," for example, a very different estimate of the Lancastrian prince from that which obtains nowadays will be found. Not that there is much in his character to excite admiration, or even esteem. The political side with which he was oftenest identified would seem to most of us now, clearly the wrong one; his moral character was not superior to the standard of the age; and his want of success as a general seems to connect itself with his personal faults. But the Black Prince himself had lost everything he had previously gained by blunders of various kinds; and in point of fact England was at last awaking to the discovery that her past successes had made her responsible for a task quite beyond her impaired strength. John of Gaunt was at least the foremost English prince of the day; Wiclif, the foremost intellectual chief. The strong man who, with very short intervals, practically governed England for thirteen years, looked about for the strong. It was an alliance—accept whatever view we please of John of Gaunt's character—formed on the common ground of patriotism, and cemented by a common perception of ecclesiastical abuses, Papal tyranny, and French evil influence. That it was an honest and independent alliance on Wiclif's part is indicated by his subsequent persistence in his own perilous course when John of Gaunt not only deserted

him but used all his influence to suppress his independence.

That the brave soldier and impetuous politician found himself at the head of the party to which Wiclif, his ally, was himself during several years opposed, is no doubt an incident of that troubled and confused decade which requires special notice. At the risk of appearing to spend too much time on a by-issue we must attempt to understand the true nature of the phenomena.

To find the key to the political complications of this remarkable time we must again emphatically call to mind the sense of distress occasioned by the contrast now presented to the previous grandeur of the reign of Edward the Third,—a weight which hung heavy at every English heart. The abuses which ranged parties on opposite sides were not new, but they pressed with tenfold force at such a time on a greatly thinned, impoverished, and exacerbated population. Some of these abuses were perennial, and, as such, were, perhaps, felt more profoundly than any; but, on the other hand, men had become accustomed to them; they were standing grievances; reform appeared almost hopeless, and many felt that the effort might be put aside for a time while different sections combined to deal with abuses the removal of which appeared to range within the limits of practical politics. Of this latter kind were the extravagance of the Court—far enough indeed from being novel—and the waste of enormous sums on so many expensive and bootless military expeditions. Those were the pressing subjects of the moment. There were the obnoxious persons visible

enough and close at hand, on whom vengeance might be visited, and by whose overthrow relief might be gained. John of Gaunt, Lord Latimer, and Alice Perrers could be seen only too often and too prominently.

And yet it was John of Gaunt who had been identified with movements against the deeper grievances, the corruptions of the Church, the secularity of the clergy, the exclusive possession of the great offices of State by ecclesiastics, the immunity of Church property from regular taxation, and the Papal exactions. Wiclif and the Commons had marched along with him against these abuses. For a time they had succeeded. The vast wealth of the Church, which had to so great an extent escaped taxation in the midst of the terrible distress, and caused it to fall with such severity on the rest of the community, had yielded to the assault. But what protection was there for the future while ecclesiastics governed the land as treasurers, chancellors, secretaries of State? This fortress also had indeed, previously to the other, been carried by assault; but only to be surrendered again immediately. William of Wykeham and his coadjutors had for a short time been superseded by laymen, and laymen were, perhaps, being already gradually trained for offices which, engaged as they had previously been in war and the administrative services growing out of war, they had not cared to fill; but the movement was impotent and premature. The fact is that these men were scarcely as yet fit for the highest offices. The clergy had, by the best of all rights, personal fitness, mono-

polised the posts of government all through the Middle Ages. Their resumption of office was almost a matter of course, and the Reformation found them still there.

But the failure did not mend matters; it only added to the sting of disappointment. The Papal Provisions and the Papal exactions went on still; and these ecclesiastical tyrants were still *French* Popes, tools of the princes so lately conquered, and now insultingly victorious. A long vista of continuous abuse confronted the patriots, and yet there was a pressing duty to be done for which all such reforms must wait. Hence what took place. The ecclesiastics, under Wykeham's leadership, saw their opportunity, and placed themselves at the head of the "Good Parliament." The Commons also saw that to work with them was their one only chance of a successful attack upon the immediate grievance. The Black Prince made a dying effort in their favour. The "Coalition," as we should say, carried everything before it for the moment, and its successful patriotism has given that Parliament a high rank in Constitutional History. But where was Wiclif? We may, indeed, trace his influence in some of the petitions of this very Parliament, as we may also in some of the Acts of previous Parliaments of the decade. But he was evidently, as we should now say, "left out in the cold." He was pulled both ways. He would go with the Parliament against Church abuses, he could not go with the bishops who guaranteed their continuance; he would gladly have secured state economy and reform, but could not desert his old ally, who was his only hope for a permanent

Church reform. His sagacity was proved by the result. He could not expect any permanent good from the "Good Parliament." It turned out a failure; while, on the other hand, John of Gaunt sank but to rise again. Not so, as a politician, Wiclif. His political work was drawing very near its close. We are now about to enter on a new stage in his career.

Thus when, after several fluctuations of incoherent parties had taken place, the time seemed to have come round for a new attack on the ever-obnoxious Prince, how could the bishops find a better avenue than through the side of the apparently forlorn Wiclif? How could they wound the Prince more effectually than by robbing him of the support he had hitherto gained from the one man who was capable of giving it, and whom nothing would induce to let go his hold on the reforms which to him were a part of his life?

Thus, and thus alone, can we account for the circumstances which confuse the student of history, and which no account of the events that has yet appeared has succeeded in clearing up. But no apology is needed for Wiclif. If his great ally resolved to accept the challenge which was distinctly offered him, and to place himself at St. Paul's by the side of one who sorely needed help, there is nothing in the alliance of which either had cause to be ashamed. It is sometimes forgotten that it required both personal and moral courage to confront Bishop Courtenay, surrounded by the fierce and independent citizens of London. No one could tell what turn they might take. Regarded

as Wiclif was with favour by the laity generally, he had separated himself for the moment from the political party which they were now favouring; and the result, brought about by John of Gaunt's own reckless wrath, showed that the Prince had interfered for Wiclif at the risk of his life, and subjected himself to ruinous loss and serious disgrace. Physical force declared itself on the side of the bishops, and they found they could afford to be magnanimous. The greatest humiliation the proud Duke had to suffer was that he should owe the cessation of the riot to the equally proud Bishop of London. Perhaps it was not a greater humiliation than that William of Wykeham, whose character stands so high, should, almost at the same moment, consider himself reduced to buy his peace with the Court by means of a bribe to the infamous Alice Perrers.* The times were much out of joint.

We must in this Lecture assume that all are acquainted with the history of this well-known riot at St. Paul's, when John of Gaunt and Bishop Courtenay found themselves fairly matched against one another. They will remember that though Wiclif escaped in the general tumult, it was but for a few months. The Episcopate of England had reported his case to Rome, and one of the last acts of Pope Gregory the Eleventh was to arrange in the most complete manner for the trial of one who could no longer be suffered to delude the people, either from his place in Parliament, the pulpits of London,

* Chronicon Angliæ, pp. lviii., 136, 137: Stubbs's Constitutional History, ii. 441.

or the Doctor's chair at Oxford. Five Bulls, issued at once, drew a net round the dangerous controversialist, from which there was to be no escape. The King and the Royal Princes, the Privy Council, the chief nobility, and the University of Oxford, were each and all to play their parts. How this also came to nothing, how the death of the old king invalidated one of the Bulls, how the University of Oxford contemptuously treated another, and how the citizens of London, returning to their old regard for Wiclif, saved him, with the help of the Princess Regent, at Lambeth—all this is matter of common history. It is enough that we are at the end of the so-called political period, the last note of it apparently being a paper presented by Wiclif to the first Parliament of Richard's reign, in reply to a question which that Parliament had formally propounded to him, on the duty of the State to withhold treasure from the Pope when it was required for the defence of the realm. This shows that for a moment he had yet again recovered the confidence of Parliament; and that the question should be officially referred to him proves, like the similar reference at the opening of the period, what a position he had attained. From this paper, and from the nineteen propositions which had just at this time been selected by his accusers to the Pope, may be gathered the doctrines he now held on the national relations to Rome; * but they must in all fairness be taken in connection with his fuller writings, and read in the light of the language and institutions of the age.

* Fasc. Zizan. p. 258.

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* ii. 343.

† Ib. i. 225.

III.

WICLIF'S WORK; HIS FINAL CONNECTION WITH OXFORD; AND HIS REAL PLACE AS A REFORMER.

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It was as Rector of Lutterworth and Oxford Doctor of Divinity that the Bishops had arraigned Wiclif before the Pope, and made him the central figure towards which the eyes of all Englishmen were directed, and around which were grouped the pressing questions and controversies of the day. This Lutterworth was all the preferment with which the dispensers of Church patronage could afford to reward such services as he had rendered; he was glad enough to end his life without being deprived of it. He had indeed held at different periods three other preferments: the rectories of Fylingham and Ludgarshall through his College, and the Prebendary of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury; the last, like Lutterworth, having been the recognition of his Royal Commissionership at Bruges; but each had been relinquished in turn, probably as interfering with the work he had been called to do in Oxford and London. No two of them were held together. No one ever accused him of grasping worldly goods.

It is one answer to blundering accusations against

Wiclif for proclaiming revolutionary principles, that no one, even in that day, saw any inconsistency between his tenure of such preferments and his call upon the laity to reform the Church. No one knew better that the clergy must live, and that they ought to be so distributed over the land as to have a distinct work in each parish. All he required was that Church revenues, after the lapse of so many years, during which the intentions of pious founders had come to be entirely frustrated, should be readjusted. Perhaps no ecclesiastic had had more offices and preferments heaped upon him than William of Wykeham, his contemporary, and political opponent; yet, beyond a supposed allusion to the secular employments which originally brought him into notice, and a word of friendly advice lest he should fall, while founding New College, into the error of Archbishop Islip in founding Canterbury Hall, not a word against him has been found in all Wiclif's works. Wykeham's own College statutes may suggest a reason for this silence, if indeed one were required in the case of a man like Wiclif, who was above all personalities. That wise founder was himself a reformer of ecclesiastical abuses after Wiclif's own heart. The great administrator had set to work, as soon as he entered upon his episcopal office, to reform all the institutions in his diocese; and he now declared with grief, that upon "a diligent examination of the various rules of the religious Orders and comparison with the lives of their several professors, he could not anywhere find that the ordinances of their founders, according to their true

design and intention, were at present observed by any of them." *

But the humble nature of Wiclif's preferments can hardly be charged as a fault against the authorities. It is the penalty paid, and willingly paid, by really great men for being in advance of their age. They have their reward, but not in the usual, secular, way. Could the Princes and Bishops, who as yet were linked by every tie to the protection of the system so much of which Wiclif had given up as hopeless, have ventured to offer him any higher elevation?

And if the prelates at the head of the English Church in Wiclif's time found it difficult to trust him, so neither were they the men to whom he could turn with any hope that he might repose on them any part of the burden which he felt himself called upon to bear. Dean Hook has judiciously remarked upon the peculiar needs of the English Church, which has always required that safe and moderate men should be selected for primates. The Fourteenth century for the most part illustrates this remark. With the exception of Bradwardine, whose noble career was cut short by the plague almost immediately after he obtained the mitre of Canterbury, the primates of Wiclif's age were mere commonplace men. Islip was little more than a practical lawyer; Langham, the monk, is only memorable for the expulsion of Wiclif from Canterbury Hall; Whittelsey was a quiet, worn-out man who had owed his position to Islip, his uncle; Sudbury was a foreign-bred lawyer and politician, whose one desire was peace. The last

* *Statut. Coll. Oxon. et Wint.*

d, as pro- led by the famous story of the Canterbury
rimages, but had certain sympathies with Wiclif's
nciples; b- he took, though reluctantly, in connec-
ast the part Wiclif's trial. After Sudbury's tragic
on with W- Insurgents on Tower Hill, Wiclif lived
murder by the primate more, and he exhibited a striking
under but one predecessors. He gathered up, in fact,
contrast to his all the characteristics which were most
in his person opposed to the Reformer's ideal. No
diametrically seemed better that these high-placed
doubt to him it tent themselves, like Langham and Sud-
men should con- restoration of cathedrals, than that such
bury, with the tenay should use his high birth and
a man as Cour- for the suppression of reform. It is
political influence with him that we have now to deal.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast
than was presented by Wiclif and Courtenay. They
must have often met at Oxford before they faced one
another at St. Paul's Cathedral and at Lambeth Palace.
The earnest student and laborious teacher, spending
long years in gaining the standpoint from which he
was to move the world, must have witnessed with
pain an undistinguished nobleman, his junior by
many years, elected Chancellor of his University at the
ge of 25, and have deplored a worship of rank which
as not very creditable to Oxford. Nor was it much
ter that the mere son of Lord Devon should be pre-
ed to the Bishopric of Hereford three years before
canonical age, and to that of London at 33.* This

* Hook's Lives of the Archbishops, iv., 320.

was in the very year (1375) when Wiclif subsided for the rest of his life into the humble position of Rector of Lutterworth. Who but can distinguish, when they met at Lambeth as judge and culprit, which was the superior,—the impetuous, unsteady, aristocratic Archbishop, or the "Evangelical Doctor?"

The period of Wiclif's life with which we are now concerned is marked by a distinct accession of hostility on his part both to the Papacy and to the Mendicant Orders. Hitherto he had been the national representative in repelling Papal encroachments on English liberties. The Pope himself had been treated with respect. He even welcomed, till the experience of a few months opened his eyes, the accession of Urban the Sixth. But in 1378 the spectacle of the rival Popes excommunicating and preaching crusades against one another—crusades which were to be supported by Indulgences, and for which Christendom was to be overrun by pardon-mongers—determined his half-formed opinions. The Pope was no longer only "*peccabilis.*" It was something in that age to get so far as to the possibility; but now it was asserted that he had actually sinned. It was the *corruptio optimi.* No long time elapsed before the Pope was "Antichrist."*

* Dr. Buddensieg has pointed out in his Preface to the "*De Christo et suo adversario Antichristo*" that a much more reasoned ground for Wiclif's attacks on the Papacy is to be found in this Tract (written in the last year, or last but one, of his life), and in others of his unprinted polemical works, than is commonly attributed to Wiclif, and that a vastly different impression from that which is left by extracts culled from different ephemeral productions will be thus derived. In this Tract we have the "Pope called 'Antichrist' only so far as he does, or leaves undone, this or that."

So also with the friars. We have already seen that his quarrel with them had been till recently attributed to a far earlier period than we now know to have been the true one. Wiclif was supposed to have been the successor of Archbishop Fitzralph (Armachanus) at Oxford, and the inheritor of the bitter contest which had raged between that controversialist and the friars. On the contrary it has now been made clear that he had, on account of their theory of poverty, distinguished between them and the "monks possessioners," whose entirely false position first attracted his indignation. Thus we hear of no objection on his part, even in 1376, to making common ause with the friars when five of their number ended in the train of John of Gaunt, their patron, the purpose of supporting him on his trial at aul's. Their learning, their teaching-power, is meeting not unfrequently with good his of the class, may have inclined him to ns even in spite of the hostility with which n, regarded in the University. Dr. Lechler re far as to relegate the famous quarrel to so last years of Wiclif's life, and to connect it with the controversy on Transubstantiation commencing in 1381, brought the friars to the

ems, however, certain that the contemporary on which the Professor relies cannot be ly followed on this point. The publicity rness of the quarrel may not have reached max till the date mentioned; but expres-

sions of the strongest kind occur as early as 1378; and we have not to look far for a cause. It is doubtless to be referred to the effects of the Papal Schism. The friars were the very men to whom the collection of the Papal funds for the internecine Crusade was intrusted; their ubiquitous presence in every diocese brought them under the immediate eye of the Rector of Lutterworth and his friends, with whom they had many a local quarrel; their old trade in Special Prayers and Letters of Fraternity assumed a new significance amidst the pestilential outburst of Pardons and Indulgences; the old University jealousies could no longer be restrained. Their "religious" houses were now with Wiclif "Caim's Castles,"* and they themselves limbs of Antichrist, spiritual manslayers, necromancers, ghostly adulterers. Strong as his language was, Mr. Matthew is no doubt justified in remarking that—

"One of Wiclif's most remarked characteristics lies in his essential moderation. Even when his language is most vehement the thought and purpose beneath it are sane and reasonable. When we go down to the kernel of thought we find no wildness. Whether the question at hand be one of doctrine or discipline, Wiclif has considered it carefully both in principle and in its practical bearings. It is this characteristic which entitles him to his pre-eminence as the first of the Reformers. Long before his time

* This expression was an invention of Wiclif's. It was formed by putting together the initial letters of the four Mendicant Orders, the Carmelites, Augustinians, Jacobites (or Dominicans), and Minorites (or Franciscans). That "m" had thus to do duty for "n" was too slight a difficulty to stand in the way of the device.

there had been heated sectaries who had denounced the whole system of the Church, but Wyclif was the first to submit it to a searching proof, to examine the prevalent practices, and ask how it was they bent away from the ideal at which they ought to aim. In his conclusions he forestated in many points the judgments of the more moderate Reformers of the sixteenth century." *

Thus while each section of his opponents had its own backers in its struggles with other sections, and, as we all know, the secular clergy, the monks, and the friars were engaged in a sort of triangular duel throughout the later Middle Ages—a circumstance which largely accounts for the success of the Reformation—Wiclif had gradually been forced by his conscience, and by the march of events, into isolation. This isolation was, as we have seen, synchronous not only with his escape from the two determined attempts to crush him, the one by the English prelates at St. Paul's, the other by the machinery they had, conjointly with Pope Gregory, put in motion at Lambeth, but also with his retirement from the service of his country in connection with Parliament.

Under the light of this general survey many circumstances in Wiclif's history, hitherto unaccountable, fall into their place. Isolated ecclesiastically and politically, the Rector of Lutterworth finds Oxford less and less suitable for even occasional residence, and he now commences a new method of reformation. Failing public and national channels, he will try what

* English Works of Wyclif; Matthew; p. xli.

can be done by the individual man, and take stock of the means still left at his disposal. With the ecclesiastical world banded against him, and the lay princes and lords daunted by the loud voice of ecclesiastical authority, he must attract the sympathies of the simpler laymen. He must go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. Two mighty agencies suggested themselves to his service, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, and the "Poor Priests" who were to make it known. These have both been already noticed in a general way. We are not to understand that either started as full-blown projects at a particular moment of a particular year; but it is certainly most noticeable that we do not hear of either till almost this very date, 1378, while we find the first translation of the Bible finished, and the "Poor Priests" in full operation, in 1381.

Perhaps, when we reflect on the significance of even the first of the above dates, and observe that there are but six years left before the Reformer's work is brought to a close by death; when we reflect, also, that besides this gigantic labour of translation and evangelisation, it was during the same period that most of his important writings attacking the corruptions of Roman doctrine were composed and sent forth, the thought which most naturally arises is—how was all this possible within the limits of human power? Surely there must be some mistake, some confusion of dates! Not at all. All modern research points to the same conclusion. We must account for it as we can.

No doubt the explanation is mainly to be found in

intense energy, extraordinary power, and resolute
of the man, who felt he was drawing near the end
is life, and yet was not too old to apply with effect
lessons of experience which he had acquired in the
se of it. There was, indeed, no time to lose. But
problem is more easy of solution when we re-
ıber how much of all the later work was really
ıared in the preceding years, a torrent ready to
flow long before, and only restrained by the block
rcumstances. We may even imagine what a relief
overchanged mind must have experienced when
time had come at last for action. It might
ımpared to the effect of some spirit-stirring sum-
to a final charge, after the patient waiting of an
under wasting fire which had lasted almost
d endurance.

the great work already noticed as appearing in
the "*Summa in Theologia,*" we have seen that there
d before us, as in a map, the principles arrived at
the systematic studies of a lifetime. What are
Trialogus," the "Wicket," the hosts of Sermons
seem to come forth as if by magic after this date,
e legitimate and fearless application of those
les to the corruptions which their author had
viously persuaded himself he was called upon
k? It was three years yet before he ventured
great assault of all, that on the doctrine of
stantiation; but every day that passed since
e and the English Church began to treat him
ıtic, had done its work in convincing him that
ge must be retorted. If his so-called heresy

was only a return to that primitive faith from which his judges and their system had departed, it was high time that it should be proved. Every fresh examination of their doctrines, every fresh chapter of the Bible he was translating, impelled him to press onwards in the course on which he had embarked with the whole of his remaining strength. Let us again remark that it is more than a loss of time to attempt to dissociate Wiclif's movements from their apparent causes, for fear of injuring his reputation by admitting the influence upon his actions of a retaliating spirit. Even if it were so, it would only be to acknowledge the way by which, in the order of Divine Providence, designs for the good of mankind are generally worked out. If Wiclif's constant preaching against the secularity of the clergy, and his support of Parliament in resisting Papal impositions and ecclesiastical immunities, had not pointed him out as a quarry to be hunted down, let us admit it as quite conceivable that the movement which purified the world in the Sixteenth century would not have commenced in the Fourteenth. Who can say whether it would have taken place at all?

This characteristic of Wiclif's movement, which may be compared to a building raised with exceeding suddenness and rapidity upon a foundation already secretly prepared, is to be most plainly observed in the translation of the Bible. That vast work was due to Wiclif himself in the originality of its conception, in the actual execution by himself of the New Testament, and in the supervision of the whole of what was

But it is now known with something much was due to his having gathered like Hereford and Purvey, whose work was only second to his own, and such men, trained by the master, were when required. Nor is it alone for this English Bible to the nation, regarded of the Reformation,* that we have to is now a commonplace to recognise the era in the English language. It is to whom is assigned a solitary place establishment of the English which tially speak. It was quite as much Wiclif's lifelong training in language, losophy. Its adoption was insured by being enshrined in the Word of Life, ually learnt to recognise as all-impor- present and future of the career of each Chaucer's amusing stories, so felici- descriptive of life and manners, did their work me; Wiclif's Bible with others; but the first pealed to a literary class; this to all. lso with that wonderful institution, the "Poor " They did not spring out of the ground at a nen Wiclif sent them forth at about the com- nent of this latter period, each with a portion of w translated Bible in his hand. They had been l beforehand. Where? No doubt at Oxford, ; Ludgarshall, in Bucks. They were graduates ndergraduates of Oxford whom he had gathered

* See Forshall and Madden's Preface to Wiclif's Bible.

round him during the course of years, and formed into some sort of School, a seminary of preachers, who multiplied and propagated their zeal to others.

We have seen that the great teacher rented rooms at Queen's for a year after his return from Bruges in 1375. This was the time of his fame, just the time when young and ardent students would have been specially attracted to the leading man of the day. It was also the year of his preferment to Lutterworth. Hence the incipient connection; for Pope Gregory's Bull to the University in 1377 made Oxford, in spite of the large sympathy it evinced in his favour, a different place to Wiclif from what it had previously been. He was now, indeed, a great man, but he was also a marked man. The University was nearly equally divided. He might well be glad to escape from a state of war, and retire to the country. Nothing could be more natural than that enthusiastic friends and followers, who probably commenced their operations from Oxford, should now contemplate the further extension of the persecuted principles under their master's direction, and that Lutterworth, where he would now principally live, should present itself as the central spot from whence they should go forth on their mission. At any rate, we are on sure ground in observing that the system was in full operation in 1382, as proved by Archbishop Courtenay's mandate to the Bishop of London, in which he denounces these "unauthorised itinerant preachers who set forth erroneous, yea, heretical assertions in public sermons, not only in churches, but also in public squares, and other profane places;

and who do this under the guise of great holiness, but without having obtained any episcopal or Papal authorisation." * These expressions mark a prevalence of the system which requires some few years, at least, to be assigned for its formation.

We cannot then be far wrong if we connect the ascertained residence of Wiclif at Oxford, in the year 1375 (perhaps also some earlier years at Ludgarshall), with the commencement of the training of the Poor Priests, the last Oxford residence in 1380 with its completion, and the early part of the intervening period with the tentative experiments, which as soon as portions of the Bible were ready for distribution in 1378, or thereabouts, soon took a great development. Somewhere about 1380 we may believe them to have spread over a great part of England. During the later years of Wiclif's life, he devoted a large part of his literary labours to the furtherance of their work. His numerous English sermons, lately published by our University, appear to be sketches written for their benefit and use.

That these itinerants were not unauthorised by Episcopal authority at first, but only when they had attracted great attention by their contests with the friars and by their circulation of the Scriptures, is tolerably certain. Dr. Shirley has remarked that "they were employed, under Episcopal sanction, through what was then the immense diocese of Lincoln, and probably in others also." † It was indeed perfectly natural that the bishops and secular clergy,

* Wilkins' *Concilia*, 1382. † Fasc. Ziz., p. 40.

who were themselves at constant war with the friars, should have welcomed men who came to do in reality what the friars were instituted for the purpose of doing, and for which they had been gladly accepted as long as they retained the impulse of their origin. Nor is there a trace for some years of any opposition on the part of these constituted authorities. It was only too generally recognised that the one proper work of the regular parson was to perform the numerous and burdensome Church Services. The Dominicans had been by their very constitution "Preachers." The Franciscans had undertaken the functions of labour amongst the poor and the education of the rich. We know how they had degenerated. These Poor Priests were not to be a reproduction of what had so signally failed. They formed no new Order. The perfect simplicity of the institution was itself a stroke of consummate genius.

Let us hear Wiclif describe these men. He speaks of his institution as a plan for sending forth good priests, formed on the model of Christ himself, not endowed, but living on alms in moderation so long as they behave well, earnest in the works which are suited for priests, such as preaching and prayer, and learned in God's laws, but abstaining entirely from all other sorts of works such as trade, hunting, and serving tables.* Dr. Shirley has remarked on their resembling in some degree the Jesuits, but far more "Wesley's lay preachers, such as they were while his strong hand was yet upon them." But they were

* Fasc. Ziz., p. xli.

not laymen at first; and it is very doubtful if they were intended to be so by Wiclif himself. Dr. Lechler has, however, discovered some passages in the Vienna MSS. which seem to hint at his having sanctioned the mission of lay preachers before his death. This is just one of those interesting cases into which we should gain so much more insight if we only had the MSS. placed before us in print.

The subject cannot fail to come home to us at the present day in reference to the comparison above suggested. The difference between the Wicliffites and the Lollards of a later date illustrates the difference between the Wesleyan Methodists as Wesley instituted them, and the Nonconformists who preceded, surrounded, and broke away from the Methodists. In Wiclif's case, like Wesley's, both men proceeding from Oxford Colleges, there was no attack on the Church, or even on Prelacy, as such; no levelling of ranks or attack on social institutions, no contempt of marriage by a priest, or depravation of sacramental grace. Wiclif and his Poor Priests were as distinct Churchmen as the men of the established system, into the midst of which they projected themselves. So also were the first Methodists. Both Reformers willingly accepted the Church as the framework and organization into which fresh life was to be infused, nothing being destroyed but the accretions and corruptions. Both made their appeal to the Bible and the Primitive Church against the barren formalities on which men had learned to rest. In apportioning blame to the author of either movement on a review of its course subse-

quent to his death, we need only remark here that it is absurd to condemn either of them without such a consideration of the circumstances under which each was placed as is seldom accorded to the subject. Every one has ready access to materials for forming a judgment as to Wesley's course; but with regard to Wiclif it is not too much to say that until the evils denounced by him and his Poor Priests were swept away there was no room whatever for Bible-teaching. There was no choice but to plough the ground, to excite men to the duty of removing obstacles, and at the same time to send forth those who would sow the seed. The whole force of the spiritual and temporal arms was holding down reform; the people themselves must be reached by getting at them, as it were, underneath that pressure.

But it is time that we attempted to mark Wiclif's place as a Reformer of doctrine with something more of the certainty which modern research has afforded us than was possible only a short time ago. And yet it will be seen that, though we know so much more at the present day than Dr. James did in 1608, we shall not need to lay down any very different conclusion from that to which he arrived. Such a sketch will conveniently precede a final review of the Reformer's struggles with the Church and the Pope.

In tracing the gradual development of Wiclif's attacks on the Papacy and the Mendicant Orders, it has been shown that the Papal schism of 1378 forms the natural boundary between a sort of acquiescence in both institutions, not without a strong desire to reform,

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ept any superstitious gloss
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expressly revealed.

The conviction that Transubstantiation not only came under this latter head but lay at the root of nearly all the gross corruption which had overspread the Church ever since, as he termed it, Satan had been let loose (*i.e.* since the year 1000, or, as we should say, since the development of the Papacy favoured the growth of mediæval corruption), had penetrated the whole nature of the Reformer. The place which Holy Scripture had now come by this very time (*1381*) to hold in the minds, both of himself and his fellow-translators and circulators of it, emphasised the attack on Transubstantiation. It was necessary to use very plain language. It was often unguarded. Such language requires to be balanced by equally well-attested statements of an opposite kind if we are to judge the controversy by the ordinary rules of fair play.

Thus—to give only the slightest sketch—we have the most incisive passages in the two very late works, the "*Trialogus*" and the "Wicket," against the blasphemy of the received doctrine that the priest makes the Body of Christ, as if a creature could make his Creator, as if God could be so dishonoured as to be created anew every day; the adoration of the consecrated Host, the self-exaltation and deification of man involved in the doctrine, are vehemently condemned; the absence of real distinction between adoration and so-called veneration ruthlessly exposed; it is "the abomination of desolation,"* it is Docetism. Yet no one can assert more strongly that nevertheless the Body and Blood of Christ are really present in the Sacrament; that while

* The "Wicket."

we do not eat the body corporeally, we receive it spiritually, not by identification with the bread, or impanation, but by faith; it is, as he repeatedly says, a "*signum efficax.*" The difficulty of explaining the mode of the Presence is no greater in his system than it is in the Bible itself, or in the teaching of our own great divines, as *e.g.* Hooker and Waterland, or, we may add, than in the Articles and Formularies of our own Church. Indeed the doctrine to be found in the latter is wonderfully similar, if not the same, with Wiclif's; for there seems to be little doubt that he limits the benefit of the Eucharist to the faithful receiver, while the unbeliever receives only the visible signs.*

In short, like the doctrine of our Prayer-book, Wiclif's standpoint cannot be identified with that of any Continental school. It neither denies the Presence, nor explains the mode. If the simple questions and answers of our own Church Catechism were expanded, they would seem to convey Wiclif's statements in so many words. What gives an appearance to the contrary is owing to the necessity of the circumstances which required the vigorous, persistent, and multiform assertion of negative doctrine, while the positive side is conveyed in words which cannot in their very nature convey an exact and definite impression. Thus while the Presence is called spiritual, figurative, sacramental, yet it is real. Christ is all-present, but in the Sacrament "distinctively, that is sacramentally." The Body of Christ does not descend from heaven to the

* See Lechler ii. 191, 2, 3: and especially the quotations from a Vienna MS. in p. 206.

bread, for it is immovable; it is not local. "It is the spirit that quickeneth." If the words of consecration carry adoration and worship, why not worship the vine, since our Lord says, "I am the true Vine?"—yet the Body of Christ, though not locally present, is in the Sacrament, as surely as the bread itself is there, which is not destroyed, but still bread. With him the Sacrament is a mystery, yet not a mystery to which any philosophical doctrine is applicable. Transubstantiation, on the other hand, was a human invention, an innovation, a dexterous method of opposing Berengarius, which had been favoured by the Church and supported by authority for three centuries, till all life had been eaten out of the Sacrament, and corruption had spread from the abuse like water drawn from a poisoned well. Again, *corruptio optimi pessima.*

Hence it was not enough merely to write and preach sound doctrine on the Eucharist; the philosophical basis of the received doctrine must be refuted and exposed, and the consequences which flowed from its adoption must be made plain. Hence the denunciation of those who most specially defended the philosophical doctrine —the learned, the educators of youth, the leading opponents of himself and his followers, the men who met them at every turn, excited the Pope, the bishops, and the University againt them, and would never rest till he and his friends were swept off the face of the earth—the Mendicant Orders. He or they must conquer. He accepted the challenge. They prevailed for the time, thousands against one. His turn was to come.

The received formula of the day for this doctrine was that the Sacrament is an accident without substance; in other words, that the quality without subject, or a whiteness or roundness of the consecrated bread might be supposed to remain after the bread itself had ceased to exist. Against this statement, the parent of so many ills, he launches every weapon of logical proof, ridicule, and sarcasm. Here he is at home. His immense training in the disputations of the Schools, in which he was the acknowledged master, gave him confidence in dealing with such questions. He exposes the absurdity of the paradox by a thousand illustrations. He carries the war into the enemies' country. They are the heretics, he the orthodox. He is the follower of Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and other Saints of Scripture, of revelation, and of reason.* Perhaps his favourite form of illustration was the following:—John the Baptist was Elias, but he did not cease to be John. Does a man cease to be a man when he is naked? The bread is the Body of Christ, but it does not cease to be bread; it is exalted, elevated to a substance more honoured. Let the heretics say what it is if it is not bread. Their heresy, he declares, arises from unbelief. Nothing is a more sure cause of unbelief. Transubstantiation does in fact involve a denial of the Real Presence. The Body of which Christ spoke is spiritual in the same sense as that used by St. Paul:—"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."† "If we had a hundred of popes, and all the friars of the

* "*Trialogus*," book iv.; *Væ Octuplex*; "Select English Works," ii. 386.

† Colossians, chap. ii. v. 9.

world were turned into cardinals, yet should we more trust the law of the gospel than we should trust all this multitude." *

Dr. Lechler's remark on Wiclif's whole investigation of the Eucharistic doctrine may conclude the sketch. "It is impossible not to be impressed with the intellectual labour, the conscientiousness, and the force of will—all equally extraordinary, which he applied to the solution of the problem. His attack on the dogma of Transubstantiation was one so concentrated, and delivered from so many sides, that the scholastic conception was shaken to its very foundations."†

How sagaciously, how unerringly he had hit upon the very keystone of the mediæval corruption is proved by the fact that, when the Reformation came, the persecution of the Reformers raged around this one dogma, accepted by both parties alike as the cardinal point on which each staked his existence. It would give this historical lecture still more of a theological

* "Select English Works," iii. 410. *De Blasphemia.* The Editor has not included the "Wicket" in these volumes because it has been so often printed, because, though admitted to be genuine, no MS. is known to exist, and because the same line of argument is to be found in some of the works included in the edition, of which he instances the *De Blasphemia.* Nevertheless one may be permitted to regret the omission. Wiclif's teaching on the Eucharist cannot be gathered from the passages cited by the Editor in anything like the same way as from the "Wicket."

Perhaps one of the ordinary run of readers may also be allowed to express regret that these English Works of Wiclif are not printed, either here or by the Early English Text Society, in the ordinary English character. The retention of the Anglo-Saxon substitutes for "th," "g," "gh," and "z," is surely unnecessary, and it certainly acts in the direction of preventing the study of Wiclif from being a pleasant and an easy task.

† ii. 193.

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worship (which Wiclif stigmatized
ısities),† from image-worship, which
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to purgatory and masses for the

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say that I hope so, but I would not swear it,
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ıld I no way."—"English Works of Wyclif,"

Wyclif." Matthew, p. xlii.

dead, while he did not deny that foundations for their benefit might be of some use to them, he insisted that the most trifling good work done when alive would outweigh any amount of treasure spent for the repose of the soul of the dead man. "Sue [follow] we Christ in our life, and let the dead bury their dead." * The sacrifice is not one of atonement, but of praise and thanksgiving.†

Of course it could not be expected that in the few years of a life, cut short so soon after he had embarked on the right track, every corrupt vestige of the system in which he had been bred could be erased. It is thus we must also take his speaking of the "Seven" Sacraments, but he placed Baptism and the Lord's Supper on quite a different footing than the rest, and hinted at those others being no more Sacraments than the institution of preaching. That the efficacy of the Sacraments did not depend on the worthiness of the ministrant he plainly taught, though it was made one of the charges against his memory at the Council of Constance that he taught the contrary. Celibacy, as a condition of the priesthood, found, of course, no favour in his sight. He had seen too much of its effects, and he denied the Scriptural sanction for it. No counsels of perfection were to separate some Christians from others. There is no such thing as neutrality. The burden cannot be shifted off from each man's own shoulder. Universal duty claims the allegiance of all alike. There could be no reserve of good works, no

* "Select English Works," iii. 339.

† Vienna MS. quoted by Lechler, ii. 184, 202.

such doctrine as works of supererogation. Faith and works are inseparable.

Here, then, was his system. Here is his place as a Reformer. It must be admitted that, from the view of a modern English Churchman, there was not much that was wanting. It is plain that it can only be accounted for by the fact of the main body of his writings continuing buried in manuscript, that the charge of his having supplied the destructive, and not the constructive, element of the later Reformation has ever been made. The genius of Milton did indeed prompt him, though with so much less knowledge than we now possess, to penetrate to the recesses of the subject. Hear him exclaim :—

"Had it not been for the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable Wiclef, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther or of Calvin had been ever known. The glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours." *

How incomprehensible is the saying of Luther that Wiclif and Huss had attacked the life of the Church under the Papacy, whereas he himself fought not so much against the life as the doctrine! † Why, the work

* Areopagitica.

† Table-talk. This is strange enough; but when the learned and admirable Henry Wharton, before the middle of the last century could pen the following, it is impossible to excuse the moderns. The passage, though long, is worth repeating :—

"He was a man than whom the whole Christian world has not in these last ages produced a greater; and who seems to have been placed as much above praise as he is above envy. He had well studied all

had been already done to his hands. That he did not understand this has yet to be accounted for.

It could not but be that a body of doctrine so distinctly "heretical," as the authorities of the English Church would naturally consider it, and proceeding from the same man who had already long ago struck at the foundation of the existing ecclesiastical abuses, should arouse a general cry of horror on the part of bishops and priests, monks and friars, with whom went also the mass of the upper classes, the educated laity. The earth seemed to open under Wiclif. Where was he to look for support? And yet the cry of defiance went up ever more full and clear. Not that the whole of the doctrines above mentioned were exhibited all at once in a form to attract attention. The burst of polemical literature, of which we have already spoken, followed upon the publication at Oxford of his famous "Twelve

the parts of theological learning, was well skilled in our municipal laws, was endowed with an uncommon gravity of manner, and, above all things, had a flaming zeal for God and love for his neighbour. Hence arose that earnest zeal and vehement desire of restoring the primitive purity in the Church; which desire he was, notwithstanding so far from suffering to go beyond its bounds, that he made it a matter of conscience to preserve all the rights of ecclesiastical discipline untouched. His excellent piety even the worst and most spiteful of his adversaries never dared to call in question; and his extraordinary learning very many of them have sufficiently owned. And, indeed in all those writings of his which are still remaining, Wiclif shows an accurate knowledge of theology, discovers a most critical judgment, argues everywhere closely and smartly, breathes a spirit of excellent piety, and interprets Holy Scripture with the most complete perspicuity and dexterity. Nothing is to be found in him that is either childish or trifling—a fault very common in the writers of that age; but everything he says is grave, judicious and exact. In fine, he was a man who wanted to render his learning consummate nothing but his living in a happier age." Appendix to Cave's *Historia Literaria; Sæculum Wicklevianum*, p. 62.)

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grasp of the new Inquisition, which spent its force in obtaining the retractation of some of his friends; he found himself still free to speak and write as no one but himself could speak and write; the propagation of his doctrines made its way as it could not have done had he been removed; the Reformation was fairly planted, and took root before he was overtaken, not by his enemies, but by the hand of death, overpowered by a premature old age, shattered by an unsparing activity and a tremendous responsibility, under which nature could hold up no longer.

The bold publication at Oxford of the "Twelve Theses on the Eucharist" may be compared with Luther's more celebrated act in nailing up the ninety-five theses on the church-door at Wittenberg; but Frederick of Saxony was a very different patron from John of Gaunt, who deserted his old ally as soon as ever he found him engaged in an attack on the doctrine of the Church; and the way had been prepared for Luther by Wiclif and Huss, by Erasmus and the Renaissance to an extent out of all proportion with anything on the side of Wiclif. And further, Wiclif, like Luther, had reason to hope much from the support of his University; but Oxford in 1381 was in a far more divided state than Wittenberg in 1517.

The Chancellor of Oxford, Dr. Barton, was a weighty opponent; and the condemnation of the Reformer's theses by the swift processes of a council, promptly summoned by the Chancellor, and largely composed of monks and friars, was for the moment a heavy blow. The history of the next year shows, however, that the

friends of Wiclif were strong enough to hold their own, and that they were only suppressed by the exercise of pressure from Church and State external to the University.

It was the strong sentiment of University independence which had turned the scale among University men in favour of the Reformer. It was, no doubt, painful enough to many members of the colleges and halls —even those who did not agree with Wiclif, but who were separated from, and generally opposed to, the monks and friars—to find the latter taking the lead in Wiclif's condemnation, and drawing down upon the University that pressure from without of which it had always been so justly jealous. To this feeling we must attribute—to forestall by a little the course of events—the election of a Chancellor for 1382, in the person of Robert Rugge, or Rigge, who, if not one of Wiclif's party, was, at any rate, a resolute supporter of Academical rights. Hence the struggle which went on throughout that year between the University and the Archbishop of Canterbury, proceeding so far as to the intimidation of the Primate's own commissary by armed men, the appointment of Wiclif's friends to preach before the University, and the public disputations, continued in spite of prohibition, on the questions at issue. Nor would the Archbishop have succeeded in obtaining the trial and submission of Wiclif's friends unless he had been able to wield the weapon of Royal power, now for the first time (King Richard being yet a boy) called into action for the purpose of backing up ecclesiastical censures.

This brings us to the final and supremely interesting questions connected with Wiclif's Appeal from the authorities of the Church to the authorities of the State. If his attack on the doctrine of Transubstantiation was to loosen the keystone of corrupt mediæval theology—the very centre of absolute sacerdotalism; if the translation and circulation of the Bible was to plant the eventual Reformation silently but irrevocably, the Appeal to Parliament against the ecclesiastical tyranny which the Crown had abetted, was also an incalculable service.(1) It taught the people that the clergy were not the Church;(2) it formed a public opinion which was sure to bear fruit;(3) it made the next great attempt at reformation possible.* As each and all of these

* On many occasions during the period which intervened between the time of Wiclif and the Reformation, the House of Commons proved that these traditions were far from extinct. It did, indeed, lose all practical power during the Wars of the Roses, and in the early years of the Tudors: but when it revived again with the Reformation, its earliest care was to replace the ecclesiastics in the position from whence they had contrived to extricate themselves. It is not generally remembered that one fruit of the close alliance between the Crown and the ecclesiastics which had marked the accession of the House of Lancaster, and which had enabled the clergy to recover from the blows received from the outraged laity under Edward III. and Richard II., was the escape of clerics from the jurisdiction which the Secular Courts had begun to exercise over them, brought about by the House of York. Edward IV. and Richard III. just as much bought the support of the ecclesiastics for their House by confirming once more the old immunities, as the House of Lancaster had bought it by the accursed Statute *De hæretico comburendo*. (Wilkins' "*Concilia*," A.D. 1462, 1483.) These immunities, combined with the direct exercise (under the Crown) of an odious power over the laity, and the revived Papal jurisdiction, brought about the state of things of which Tyndale long afterwards complained:—"Emperors and Kings," said he, "are nothing nowadays, but even hangmen to the Pope and Bishops, to kill whomsoever they condemn, as Pilate was to the Scribes and Pharisees and high Bishops to hang Christ." (Russel's Tyndale's Works, i. 274.)

great facts and principles date locally from Oxford, and form emphatically part and parcel of Wiclif's Oxford career in 1381, it is not inappropriate that an attempt to draw attention to them should be made at Oxford in 1881, the five-hundredth year after they happened. It might well be maintained that the whole of the other services he performed were subsidiary to these three. Of all the so-called "Oxford Movements" that have taken place, this is incomparably the greatest.

When Chancellor Barton and his council suspended Wiclif from the oral defence of the Twelve Theses, to which he had challenged all-comers, they found him in the very act of propounding his doctrines in the lecture-room of the Augustinian Monastery. When we look at Wadham College, we view the very site of the building where the great event took place. For the moment, he said nothing, but that he defied the Chancellor or any one of his party to refute his propositions; "but afterwards," says the Chancellor, "that his heresy and his obstinacy might become more manifest, he publicly appealed for the condemnation of the Chancellor and the aforesaid judgment, not to the Pope, Bishop, or Ecclesiastical Ordinary, but, like a heretic, clinging to the secular power for the defence of his error and heresy, to King Richard."* It was, indeed, a course unrecognised by the University system of appeals, which admitted of reference to the King only in temporal causes, and in the last resort; but it was at any rate so far considered reasonable in this case that John of Gaunt at once came up from London to inform Wiclif

* Wilkins' "*Concilia*," A.D. 1382. Fasc. Zizan., p. 114

that he must expect no help from the Royal Court. The King was but fifteen. The Duke, the patron of the friars, was at the head of affairs, and, with the instinct of a statesman, saw that this was much too delicate a subject to be meddled with. The finances of the country were in a most dangerous condition. The celebrated Poll-tax, which was so soon to bring on the Insurrection, had just been agreed to by Parliament, and the Estate of the clergy had made some sacrifice in order to combine with the rest. The mutterings of the coming storm were only too audible. Wiclif must be thrown overboard. There was a time for all things. Thus the "*nobilis dominus, dux egregius, et miles strenuus, sapiensque consiliarius, Dux Lancastriæ, sacræ ecclesiæ filius fidelis.*" * —for the Duke was in high favour with the Chancellor—finds it worth while to come himself, no doubt with all the train befitting Royalty, rather than send any one else, or commit his orders to writing. His decree is plain enough. He "prohibits the said John from saying another word on the subject."

The appeal to the secular power had thus for the moment failed, but the appellant's resources, even by way of appeal, were, as we shall see, not yet exhausted. In the meantime he could educate the public. Nothing further could indeed be done at Oxford; the Chancellor and the Crown had between them closed his lips, but he could still continue the struggle, and that in a manner far more effective than ever. His pen was free. He at once wrote his celebrated "Confession," the "*De Sacramento Altaris*," and published it, as

* Wilkins' "*Concilia*;" A.D. 1382.

would appear, only a few days after these transactions.* This was his first way of replying to those who had silenced him. The "Wicket," in which the argument was placed in a more popular form, and written in strong, nervous English, came out immediately afterwards, to be followed by the mass of literature already mentioned.

In the very midst of these events at the University occurred the frightful Insurrection of the summer of 1381. How was it possible that his enemies, excited to fury against the "heretic" should fail to connect Wiclif's proceedings with those of Wat Tyler and John Ball? They would certainly have been more than human if they had abstained. Had not Oxford always been the very fugleman of national conflicts? Was there ever a disturbance there that had not made itself felt throughout the country? We have already observed, in the first Lecture, the true state of this question, and seen that there is no ground whatever for the charge of complicity, which was indeed rather the production of later times. Nevertheless, the proceedings of the prelates were immensely favoured by the events which had taken place. Men's minds were full of extreme alarm at the levelling ideas of the insurgents. It was not difficult to point the connection between these ideas and the assaults upon Church doctrine and Church property for which Wiclif had been, in the view of the ecclesiastical authorities, infamous for years.† Now was the time to take advantage of the tide of public opinion, and "hoise the engineer with his own petard."

* Fasc. Ziz., pp. xliii. 115. † Ibid; 272.

Further, the Insurrection had brought to the first place in the English Church, over the headless trunk of Simon Sudbury, the one man best calculated to bring the arch offender to justice. This was William Courtenay, whose career, running by the side of Wiclif's, we have already traced. No timid counsels would henceforth paralyse the arm of the Church; no John of Gaunt—for the Insurrection had clipped his wings—would any longer interpose between Courtenay and the heretic. The University, of which Courtenay had once been Chancellor, should recognise the hand of one who knew what he was about. He was only Bishop of London when Wiclif had twice escaped him; he was now Primate of all England.

The struggle which took place in 1382 between Courtenay, at the head of his mixed Council in London —the famous "Synod of the Earthquake," consisting of bishops, theologians, and ecclesiastical lawyers, selected by himself—and the University (now more largely under Wiclif's auspices than before), is told at length by so many writers, and so little fresh light has been thrown upon it, that details will be out of place in this Lecture. The point which requires notice is that the Earthquake Synod may be said to commence the history of the English Inquisition—a bloody and terrible history, which did not terminate until the Long Parliament put an end to the High Commission Court in 1641. Courtenay now styles himself "the Chief Inquisitor,"* and obtains from the Government

* "*Per totam nostram provinciam Cant. inquisitor hæreticæ pravitatis.*" Each of his suffragans is to constitute himself an "Inquisitor" in his own diocese. Wilkins' *Concilia;* A.D. 1382.

for the first time in English history power to carry out the decrees of what was to all intents and purposes the Inquisition.

"It is ordained and assented in this present Parliament that the King's Commissions be made and directed to the Sheriffs and other Ministers of our Sovereign Lord the King, or other sufficient persons learned; and according to the certifications of the prelates thereof, to be made in the chancery from time to time, to arrest all such preachers, and also their fautors, maintainers, and abettors, and to hold them in arrest in strong prison till they will justify them according to law and reason of Holy Church."

The wording of this significant document is, however, misleading. It was not "assented to" by the Commons, as it pretended. It was a mere [illegible] was entered among the Statutes of the [illegible] it was in reality nothing else than a Royal [illegible] which Courtenay had persuaded the House [illegible] to pass and the King to assent to. In [illegible] 1382, the House of Commons petitioned [illegible] unconstitutional proceeding, and demanded [illegible] so-called Statute, to which their assent had [illegible] given, should be withdrawn; and it was [illegible] immediately. Thus Old England escaped [illegible] period the disgrace of giving full legislative [illegible] State punishments for heresy at the mere [illegible] ecclesiastics.* When, nineteen years later, [illegible] Courtenay the discredit belongs of having been the first to [illegible] arm of flesh, the first to adopt the the principle of visiting [illegible] ences with temporal penalties." (Hook's "Lives of the [illegible]," iv. 353.) Mr. T. Arnold thinks, however, that capital [illegible] for heresy was not unknown even in Wiclif's time. [illegible] English Works," p. xi.)

she relinquished such freedom as she still retained, she adopted the terrible alternative of capital punishment under the Act *De hæretico comburendo*, A.D. 1401.

Courtenay, however, foreseeing the difficulty, had had sufficient sagacity to contrive, and power to extract from the boy-king in June, 1382, a special Royal Ordinance, or patent, which sufficiently served his purpose, though the pretended Statute had failed. It did not, indeed, enable the bishops to call upon the sheriffs to seize and imprison accused persons, but it gave the bishops permission to incarcerate them in their own prisons by the hands of their own officials. These episcopal prisons had been constructed in the previous century, but we do not know how far they had been used: perhaps the terror of them had been enough; they were soon to be peopled by the "Lollards." The "Royal Ordinance" was the weapon now wielded by the Archbishop in his conflict with the Wicliffian University in 1382. Wiclif replied by appealing to the King and Parliament.

The above brief sketch is especially interesting both on the constitutional ground, as an additional proof that the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament had become decidedly necessary at this period, and also as bringing to the front the great question of the limits within which the ecclesiastical body should be confined in dealing with differences of theological opinion. On the Continent the principles of the Inquisition, so fearfully exemplified during the Albigensian Crusade, had been established in the Thirteenth century as a matter of course, and simply by the power of the Crown. Though occasionally disputed, the summons

of the clergy was very generally obeyed by the magis-
trate without any express law. In England milder
counsels had prevailed till the advent of Wiclif became
the signal for definite and organized coercion. Were
the charges against him such as to justify the intro-
duction of the principles of the Continental Inquisition?

It must be admitted by all that every Church has a
perfect right to lay down laws or articles binding on
its clergy, to try those who are accused of transgressing
those laws, and to prohibit, suspend, or finally eject
the guilty and obstinate. The mediæval Church added another
try them? The question is, Who is
What, over and above the penalty of silence, shall
the punishment of the guilty? It also applied t
questions to laymen as well as clergy. The whole
of men were included in the blessings—why not a
the penalties of the Church?

Wiclif himself, whatever he thought about the
which was to try him, could hardly have obje
the principle that he was liable to be tried. H
never have supposed that his attacks on Transub
tion and other doctrines, as then held, could
over by the ecclesiastical authorities. To th
attacks were quite as grave as the ancient
The Papal mediæval system had raised t
rank matters which had once been only
opinion. But Wiclif had a great deal to s
mode in which he was to be tried, and his e
ments may be fairly paraphrased as follows
"I appeal to the Church of the first thou
r our Lord's time. I challenge the exis

to dispute these questions with me. You reply that the Church has settled the matter; and have, in fact, condemned me beforehand. I cannot expect at your hands anything else but to be silenced, and, what is more, according to your new Ordinance, imprisoned. I know what that means. I demand, therefore, that the lay voice shall be heard. I have appealed to the King against the University; I now appeal to the King and Parliament against the Synod which is about to use the secular arm—the arm of Parliament. If I am to be tried, let me have a fair trial, and argue my case before the world. If that is not to be, I will at least take care that Parliament shall understand the essential points at issue, and the use that is to be made of its power, and I will also do my best to secure that the ecclesiastics shall be forced to consider some things as open questions which they now count it heresy on my part to attack. That very thing is a mark of the corruption of the Church: but the laity are responsible for its purity. They only conserve the endowments and institutions of the clergy under the condition of that purity. And it has now become a personal matter for them; it affects their lives and fortunes. If they see their way to clearing off some of the most open corruptions of the Church, the English people, who have now the Bible in their hands, will speedily perceive that I am no heretic, but the truest Churchman in the land."

Until we recognise the wide distiction between such opinions as these, and those of the ecclesiastics generally, supported by the chief powers of the State, we can do no justice to either party. It was to

require ages yet before such essential differences as to trial of doctrine could be reconciled in any way whatever. Have we quite got to the bottom of it in our own day?

The document which Wiclif presented to Parliament has been often published, first by Dr. James, and lastly by Mr. T. Arnold. It is called his "Complaint." It is a sort of memorial, or petition, demanding liberty and justice, under four heads. As this is the last of the great public documents that can with any certainty be attributed to Wiclif (since the so-called "Letter to the Pope" is now understood to be rather an address to certain of his own friends*), a short account of it may be acceptable as a summary of the points in which he thought the laity of the land in Parliament ought to control the ecclesiastical system of the day.

The first point is, that Parliament should enable all members of religious Orders to leave them if they please. This he grounds on the higher teaching of our Lord to the Apostles; on the precedents already established for such liberty; on the abuse of their own rules, which widely prevailed in consequence of monks and friars undertaking secular offices; and, finally, on the mere novelty of these institutions. The second and third points are of much the same kind as we have already noticed in relation to the doctrine of Dominion, viz., the right of the King to deal with Church temporalities if abused, the absurdities which flow from the contrary doctrines, and the reciprocal

* Lechler ii., 284; "The English Works of Wyclif;" Matthew; p. xxxi.

nature of ecclesiastical duty and ecclesiastical pay. The last is a short summary of the fatal objections to Transubstantiation—which is exposed as a mere modern abuse; and the paper concludes with a stirring summons to Parliament to maintain the true doctrine, "as they are bound on pain of damnation, since it is openly taught in Holy Writ, and by reason and wit; and damn we this cursed heresy of Antichrist, and his hypocrites, and worldly priests."

It is to the effect of this document, acting on the Legislature, which was already so familiar with his teaching in many forms, and especially to its effect on the House of Commons, which, at various times in Richard's reign, exhibited profound traces of his influence, that we must attribute the otherwise inexplicable fact of Wiclif's escape when his friends were unrelentingly hunted down at Oxford, and forced to submit. One after another—Swinderby, Bedeman, Repington, Aston—gave up the struggle; Hereford was cited to Rome, and imprisoned. But Wiclif never submitted, never ceased for a moment to thunder forth his defiance, poured forth at a speed which seems almost incredible, sermon after sermon, book after book. It has been thought that he appeared once again before the Convocation of Canterbury assembled at Oxford at the close of 1382; but if he did (which is most doubtful), no sentence of condemnation was passed upon him, no recantation has ever been produced.*

* Lechler ii., 268. "The English Works of Wyclif;" Matthew; p. xlvii. Vaughan and other writers had previously pointed this out

Wiclif's retirement at Lutterworth, where
lived after he was silenced at Oxford in 1381,
to his escape; but he could have been
there if the bishops had dared. It is plain
opinion was too strong, the Legislature
under his influence. There were also at
people who had once been his friends, and
prepared to let him suffer even now. Perhaps
died in a bishop's prison, his fame as a
might have done something for his memory,
pains would have been taken in subsequent
disentangle it from the confusion to which it
consigned. But it was not to be. Not one
short remaining life could be spared, not
that of that failing strength. Struck by the
fragment which could not but overtake such an un-
activity of brain, he died at his Rectory in
the last day of the year 1384, having lit a
as Hugh Latimer said of himself and his
under Queen Mary, which should never be
extinguished.

Was he permitted to foresee that the gracious
Bohemian lady who had just married his youthful
sovereign was to be the "good Queen Anne," "good,"
because she learnt to support the Bible-teaching which
he had introduced, and that this Continental connection
was, through him, to form a golden link in the religious
history of the future? Was it given him to prophesy that
the knights and gentlemen who remembered his instruc-
tions would be the agents in Parliament during this
very reign, which commenced for him so unpropitiously,

in firmly establishing the great anti-Papal acts of Edward the Third, and the system of checking by fresh Mortmain laws that superfluity of ecclesiastical wealth which he had spent his life in denouncing? We know that he saw the distinct vision of reform springing from the very bosom of the corrupt monastic orders, from a Savonarola and a Luther: did he divine that the great Councils of Western Europe should echo back his claim for judgment on the Popes? Who can tell?

It has been said of Wiclif that he was no more the author of the Reformation than the morning star is the cause of day; in other words, that while he is the "Morning Star," we must regard that image as merely betokening priority, and refuse to connect with it the idea of causation. But enough has been said to prove that, so far as human causation is concerned, the Reformation in England, if not elsewhere, was no sudden outburst, but must be traced to preceding times, and it can be connected with no one preceding individual with anything like the same distinctness as with Wiclif. The extravagances of a section of the Lollards were damaging enough; but they made men think. "These men were sentinels," says Fuller, "against an army of enemies, till God sent Luther to relieve them." The leaven which Wiclif had inserted within the mass of English thought never ceased to ferment, and much of the religious

at the present day may be traced to
1 source.*
eminently trace the course of his
ord. Not many years after the foun-
College, the new doctrines found
and we find the courtiers reproaching
nder with having raised up "a semi-
† In the reign of Henry the Sixth
me Bishop (Fleming) who, at the
ıe Pope, exhumed and burnt the
and scattered the ashes into the
ift, founding Lincoln College for
pose of counteracting the doctrines
so easily mingled with the elements.
the feeling against the Reformer's
middle of the century entertained
ew men able at that time to measure
ascoigne, the Chancellor of Oxford,
ortance: *ideo vocatur Wiclyffe, nequam*
dampnatæ (with allusion to the three
n London, Oxford, and Constance).‡

ıor instances of the influence which Wiclif's
ıg at the time of the Reformation, are the well-
ley, the Augustinian monk, who owed much to
ınd Patmore, Rector of Haddom. But it is not in
which have come to light in that obscure age
to find materials for an estimate of this influence.
been already quoted from Leland, such mistakes
concerning translations of the Bible previous to
idences as occur of the constant repression of
he most palpable inferences to those who are
subject has ever yet been investigated.
rkeham and his Colleges"; By Mackenzie E. C.

eritatum; Gascoigne;" by J. E. T. Rogers, M.P.,

Similar puns upon the dreaded name were not unusual in that age; "Wykbeliffe" was a common form.

Nor can we disconnect the early and powerful aid given at Oxford to the Renaissance from the survival of the influences which he had planted, and especially from the study of the Bible which he had given to the English world.* The constant feuds at Oxford between the secular and the regular clergy gathered ever fresh force in the Fifteenth century; and at least the learned knew where the weapons of attack were to be found; while the growth of the colleges—founded one after another, even in that reactionary century, for the express purpose of training the secular clergy, and rigidly excluding, even from the most superstitious foundations, like All Souls, and the distinctly anti-Lollard, like Lincoln, the monks and friars—may well be held to testify to the indelible mark which Wiclif had impressed on his University.

It was this which, at the general crash of the Reformation, saved the ancient colleges which are still exist-

* Even the scanty records which Wood sorrowfully tells us are all he could find by way of materials for Oxford history in the Fifteenth century, afford notices of a very suggestive character. (See Wood's Annals, 1406, 1411, 1476.) In the latter year King Edward IV., "understanding that certain scholars were corrupted with the heresies and doctrine of John Wycleve and Reynold Peacock," ordered the University to look to it. The University made search, and burnt those books which were discovered "as it were deserted and unknown, lying concealed in certain places." They assured the King they would burn in the same way any others they might find. Their search, in all probability, was far from successful. Twenty years after the last-named date, when the great scholars of the Renaissance, returning from Italy, introduced the "new learning" to Oxford, they found no lack of eager disciples. In that year, 1496, Colet lectured on the New Testament to crowded audiences. Can we believe that the extraordinary interest he excited was the mere product of influences imported from the Continent?

Of the nineteen "religious" houses and colleges existing at that time, some of them of surpassing magnificence, every one fell like the walls of Jericho at the trumpet sound of Israel, while the fourteen colleges for Seculars, and those of later foundation in their turn, marched up into the vacant places and occupied the ground. The three several Cardinal's, King's, and Christchurch, by the thirteenth, founded out of monastic spoils Cardinal Wolsey himself, was known in the short of seven years, mark the transition. Every of these has, or ought to have, in its archives document by which, in 1534, it acknowledged same ample terms as the University collec- the Royal Supremacy; and, previously to that majority of the seniors did, as a matter of however we may disapprove of their subser- and admire the spirit of the junior masters who out against them, commit themselves to the of national independence in the case of the Dictator's divorce.

Private desires of Henry the Eighth were but out the national convictions of ages, which no ever proclaimed and emphasised as Wiclif had Indeed, as early as 1530, when the King had gone so far as to perceive he must go farther, on the arguments used by Wiclif as much as great statutes of the Fourteenth century. It hat year that he sent to Oxford for Wiclif's s," the Articles which had been condemned at nd London in 1410, and at the Council of

Constance in 1414. These the University solemnly transmitted; and the King having warmly thanked it for doing so—

"after due consideration of the said Articles (wherein, as 'tis said, he found that the Pope's power was not found, nor founded, on God's word), took occasion thence to vex the Pope, who hindered his design for being divorced from his brother's wife, by promoting Wycleve's doctrine and ejecting Papacy out of his kingdom."*

Henry and his advisers well understood that the controversy had been fought out a century and a half before, that the disputed succession to the Crown had alone prevented the nation from enjoying the benefit of its victory, so barren at the moment, and that the time had come when the Prince-dictator might serve his own purposes with the concurrence of a vast body of the people who knew that his cause was theirs. They had been defrauded of their rights since the time of Pope Martin the Fifth, and had almost learnt to forget them during the Wars of the Roses. The intelligence of the country had long been prepared for the hour which had now arrived.

Hence the celebrated rebuke of the same King to his greedy courtiers, which served as a model to his successors:—

"Whereas we had a regard only to pull down sin by defacing the monasteries, you have a desire also to

* Wood's Annals, 1530.

oodness by subversion of colleges, I tell
I judge no land in England better
hat which is given to the Universities;
maintenance our realm shall be well
we be dead and rotten. . . . . I love
ill that I will impair the revenues of
by a penny whereby it may be up-

Universities lost many a penny during
which were required to establish the
hough the violent changes of the last four
aw them alternately Papist and Protes-
heir ancient privileges were occasionally
ly overborne, they were yet permitted to
he flood not much the worse—in many
better for the process. Even Protector
o developed serious designs upon West-
ey, speaking publicly for, and in the
dward the Sixth, observed that "when the
ges be gone, it shall be hard to say whose
and next the door." Lastly, we know
izabeth made of the Universities when
got rid of Mary's nominees. If the
had not required and received essen-
ely help from these bodies, they could
urvived the storms which waged all round
the Reformation have assumed its
uld they had not survived?
m if University, which may thus in some sense
rd owe the preservation of its very existence
hat troubled period to John Wiclif, it cannot

but be right that his services should be recognised, however late, and his cause pleaded against the multitude of his enemies, present as well as past. It cannot but be right as to the time selected. Should not the Quincentenary of the very year which witnessed at Oxford the completion of Wiclif's translation of the Bible, his immortal and ever fruit-bearing attack on Roman doctrine, and his appeal to King and Parliament against the Ecclesiastical Courts, be publicly brought before the notice of Oxford University—even though, amidst its own philosophical and theological struggles, it has almost forgotten that it once nursed the genius of the "Evangelical Doctor," defended the principles he taught her sons, and transmitted his influences through successive generations of so-called free-born, but really enslaved and cruelly-deceived Englishmen, till the full day which he so brilliantly heralded came at last?

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